

THE SOVIET NAVY  
AND SUPERPOWER FOREIGN POLICY  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Leslie Allen Joslin



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THE SOVIET NAVY  
AND SUPERPOWER FOREIGN POLICY  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
A Study in the Political Application of Naval Force  
by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of the University of Colorado in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

1974

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Leslie Allen Joslin

has been approved for the

Department of

Political Science

by



Joslin, Leslie Allen (M.A., Political Science)

The Soviet Navy and Superpower Foreign Policy in the  
Middle East: A Study in the Political Application  
of Naval Force

Thesis directed by Professor W. A. E. Skurnik

Originally deployed forward in the waters of the Middle East only a decade ago to defend the Soviet homeland against Western strategic attack from the sea, the Soviet Navy, since the Six Day War of 1967, has become an increasingly important instrument of Moscow's foreign policy as well as an increasingly significant influence upon American foreign policy in the region.

Application of the concept of armed naval suasion--an explanation of the political application of naval force as it seems to influence national actors in international arena situations short of war--to available empirical data both facilitates demonstration of the Soviet Navy's evolution as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East and contributes to the determination of appropriate American policy responses to the challenge which that navy as such continues to pose to United States interests in the region.

Despite a few setbacks such as that in Egypt during 1972, the growing perception of Soviet naval ascendancy resulting from Moscow's resilient political application of naval force, albeit somewhat unjustified, has succeeded in



significantly strengthening the Soviet strategic position and seriously challenging the interests of the United States in the region. Application of the naval suasion concept to the problem of ascertaining the general nature of appropriate policy responses to this challenge indicates that development and deployment of a naval force structure credible enough to evoke suasion effects as required while minimizing the potentially counterproductive political effects of such a force is essential to the successful pursuit of American foreign policy in the Middle East. While overreliance on a weak "policy of surrogation" and maintenance of the no-longer-politically-viable Middle East Force are determined to be inappropriate responses, retention and revitalization of a modified U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea and the continuation of a credible intermittent American naval presence in the Indian Ocean supported by a modest facility on Diego Garcia--both of which could be reinforced in time of crisis to effectively exercise naval suasion--are shown to be components of an appropriate American policy response to the political challenge of the Soviet Navy. The probable future of continued political application of Soviet naval force in the Middle East will require the continued presence of the U. S. Navy to support American diplomacy in the region.

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To my father,  
Leslie Hugh Joslin,  
Captain, Medical Service Corps, U. S. Navy, Retired,  
for the example he set.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The past year--one which has witnessed still another major Arab-Israeli war and its aftermath as well as many other significant events within a context of continuing superpower competition throughout the region--has been an exciting and challenging one in which to research, think, and write about "The Soviet Navy and Superpower Foreign Policy in the Middle East." Without the assistance and contributions of many who should be acknowledged, the present study could not have succeeded to the extent that it has.

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It should be emphasized at the outset that any un-attributed opinions expressed or conclusions drawn herein, which are based entirely upon available open-source data, are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the U. S. Navy.

Leslie A. Joslin  
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The forward deployment of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East during the past decade has had a profound effect on the foreign policies of the superpowers --the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics<sup>1</sup>--vis-a-vis the region. While the naval power deployed in these waters by the Soviet Union has not yet superseded that of the United States, the utility of the Soviet Navy to Moscow throughout this region appears to reside not so much in its actual war-making capabilities as in its application as an instrument of

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<sup>1</sup>"As World War II moved into its final stages, William T. R. Fox wrote a book called The Superpowers, by which he meant the great powers of the post-war world, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. But many nuclear explosions have gone up in smoke since then, along with colonial possessions, and the disparities in power that super-status connoted have come to differentiate the United States and the Soviet Union from all the other powers of the world. This is not to argue that it will be ever thus, but only that it is currently the case, as it has been for most of the post-war period. These powers stand head and shoulders above all the others in the scope of their international power--in their ability to assert, to protect, and to advance their political, economic, and military interests around the globe." Bernard C. Cohen, "National-International Linkages: Superpolitics," in James N. Rosenau, ed., Linkage Politics, New York, The Free Press, 1969, p. 126.





foreign policy<sup>2</sup> which has paid handsome dividends in an area which the American military presence following World War II--particularly in the form of the U. S. Sixth Fleet<sup>3</sup>--had made virtually a Western preserve but which, by the end of the 1960s, had become an arena--perhaps even the salient one<sup>4</sup>--of superpower competition.

As three centuries of British naval supremacy demonstrated, a nation's naval forces can play a significant role in its pursuit of certain foreign policy objectives. Indeed, as Laurence W. Martin observed:<sup>5</sup>

The essential quality of a military navy is obviously its ultimate capacity to engage and fight an enemy. Yet, for the greater portion of its existence, a navy is not engaged in combat. During this time of peace, however, a navy by no means fails to exert an influence upon international affairs. This effectiveness short of war is difficult to characterize but is nevertheless pervasive and may well comprise the most significant benefit a nation may derive from its naval investment.

However, perhaps because it is "difficult to characterize," the peacetime role of naval forces as instruments of foreign policy remains a relatively obscure one which often is neglected in foreign policy literature. While the dramatic

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<sup>2</sup>Yair Evron, The Middle East: Nations, Superpowers, and Wars, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1973, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Richard H. Pfaff, "The American Military Presence in the Middle East," Middle East Forum, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (Summer 1972), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Aaron S. Klieman, Soviet Russia and the Middle East, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Laurence W. Martin, The Sea in Modern Strategy, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1967, p. 133.



rise of the Soviet Navy certainly has not gone unnoticed, most analyses have emphasized its military challenge to the United States or to NATO sea power in the event of war<sup>6</sup> at the expense of attention to its more subtle but equally important political utility in and implications for the current and, hopefully, more likely future regime of peace --or, at least, of non-war. Given the increasing salience of the Soviet Navy, not only to policy makers but to students of international relations and foreign policy as well, this is a lamentable situation.

#### THE STUDY: SCOPE AND APPROACH

In an attempt at least partially to redress this situation but, more importantly, to develop an increased insight into the employment of superpower naval forces as instruments of foreign policy, this study examines some of the recent past, present, and possible future political applications of Soviet naval power in the Middle East and some of their impact on and implications for pertinent aspects of American foreign policy in the region. More specifically, by employing as an orienting device the concept of naval suasion--the evocation of reactions through the existence, display, manipulation, or symbolic use of naval power which are a function of the observer's perceptions of the naval capabilities deployed--which reflects

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<sup>6</sup>Richard T. Ackley, "The Soviet Navy's Role in Foreign Policy," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXIV, No. 9 (May 1972), p. 48.



the ways in which the mere presence of naval forces as well as the active application of naval force short of war seem to influence the behavior of national actors, the study focuses on the ways in which the Soviet Navy functions as an instrument of foreign policy, the challenge which Moscow's application of it as such represents to American foreign policy, the appropriateness and effectiveness of some of Washington's past, present, and possible future responses to this challenge, and other supporting and related matters.

The study is, therefore, one which is limited in scope and well-defined in focus. It is intended neither as a thorough analysis of Soviet and American foreign policies in the Middle East nor as a detailed treatment of the naval strategies, doctrines, or capabilities of those two powers. Rather, within the context of the general nature of superpower policies toward the region which have evolved as the rigidities of the "cold war" have given way to the ambiguities of "detente" or, in preferred Soviet terminology, "peaceful coexistence,"<sup>7</sup> it is a study of the political application of naval force in the Middle East by the world's two foremost naval powers.

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<sup>7</sup>Marshall D. Shulman, "Toward a Western Philosophy of Coexistence," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 52, No. 1 (October 1973), pp. 35-36.





## THE POLITICAL APPLICATION OF NAVAL FORCE:

### A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As a primary element of national power,<sup>8</sup> military force may be manipulated in time of peace as well as in war to provide the possessing nation the prestige and leverage essential to the pursuit and achievement of its interests and objectives in international affairs.<sup>9</sup> In possessing a peacetime political function in addition to its combat capabilities, a naval force is like all other forms of military power and potential which may be brought to bear in support of a nation's foreign policy, only more so.<sup>10</sup> While naval power is only one of the non-belligerent military instruments of foreign policy, it is by its very nature a most flexible, maneuverable, and particularly useful instrument, operating in a medium which is--at least in time of peace--much freer of the many restrictions and risks involved in the deployment of land-based air or ground forces.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (Third Edition), New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, p. 118.

<sup>9</sup>Martin, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

<sup>10</sup>Edward Luttwak, The Political Application of Naval Force, Newport, U. S. Naval War College, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 134. According to Luttwak, loc. cit.: "Land-based forces, whether ground or air, can also be deployed in a manner calculated to encourage friends and coerce enemies, but only within the narrow constraints of insertion feasibility, and with inherently greater risks, since the land nexus can convert any significant deployment into a political commitment with all the rigidities that this implies."





Although naval power plays an important and unique foreign policy role, it does so in conjunction with other military forces and within an overall politico-military environment<sup>12</sup> that makes it extremely difficult, at best, to isolate and evaluate the peculiarly naval contribution. Yet, in order to explore the political utility of any naval force within any portion of the international milieu, the ways in which its political effects are generated must be defined and classified--even if the precision and stability of any such framework imposed upon the dynamic environment of international politics necessarily is limited.

Recognizing the fact that "any system of definitions imposed on the fluid and variegated world of politics will inevitably be both arbitrary and incomplete" but, at the same time, that "one need not suspend thought nor distort every marginal phenomenon in order to obtain a 'good fit', to make use of the analytical convenience of a typology,"<sup>13</sup> Edward Luttwak has developed a typology which is useful to the development of an understanding of the political application of naval power. Based on the concept of suasion, the essence of which usefully suggests the indirect nature of any political application of naval force, this typology provides a useful conceptual framework for this study.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Luttwak, op. cit., p. 19.



Armed Suasion. Any instrument of military power--in the present study, naval power--that can be used to inflict damage upon an enemy in wartime may also be employed to influence the conduct of nations in the absence of open hostilities. The necessary, but by no means sufficient, condition for this to occur is that the leaders of the nations concerned perceive the capabilities deployed, correctly or otherwise, so that the combat potential of the deploying nation intrudes on their image of the policy environment and thus impinges on their decisions. Armed suasion, therefore, defines others' reactions, and not the actions or the intentions of the deploying nation: the latter may exercise suasion in order to evoke suasion effects, but cannot achieve them directly in the sense that combat effects are achieved by the application of force.<sup>14</sup>

Since suasion is operative through the perceptions of others, with all that this entails in the way of distortion, the exercise of suasion is inherently unpredictable in its results. For example:<sup>15</sup>

Routine fleet movements may be seen . . . as threatening where no threat is intended . . . ; on the other hand, a deliberate but tacit threat may be ignored. And then, in the decision-making arena of the target parties the threat--or supportive--perceptions evoked by the forces deployed have to compete with all other political pressures that may have a bearing on the decision, and the final outcome of this interaction is inherently unpredictable.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.



The exercise of armed suasion in peacetime does not necessarily preclude the actual use of force insofar as this use is "symbolic" politically.<sup>16</sup>

Since this is the era of undeclared conflict . . . the term 'peacetime' now defines only the absence of general hostilities conducted at a high level of intensity. It follows that no firm dividing line can be established between the use of threats, and the actual infliction of damage in small doses. So long as the purpose and context of the use of force remains political, i.e., intended to evoke suasion effects rather than to destroy enemy forces or values, it cannot be arbitrarily excluded from the range of political instrumentalities provided by [naval forces] in 'peacetime.' But the political use of symbolic force does require that the target party recognize its symbolic nature, i.e., that the damage inflicted has been deliberately minimized. This in turn requires the deploying party to discriminate successfully between what is, and what is not, symbolic in terms of others' perceptions and attitudes which may be quite different from his own.

Of course, the exercise of naval suasion is not predicated on the absence of hostilities.<sup>17</sup>

Because armed suasion is operative on both the tactical and the political levels, perceptive contradictions may occur between the two and result in serious problems of decision. For example:<sup>18</sup>

One may readily visualize a situation in which the 'tactical' suasion of, say, much reinforced Russian naval and naval air forces based in Egypt and Syria could discourage the U. S. Navy from deploying its own forces in the eastern Mediterranean for reasons of elementary military prudence, while at the same time the net political worth of a continued deployment

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 11.





was greater than ever. And it is the political factors that are normally of overriding importance in the decision-making arena . . . .

Since men at the tactical and political levels have quite different responsibilities, contradictions between the two levels of suasion may produce acute internal controversy--just as the conflict between tactical and political priorities has proved a chronic source of tension between military men and politicians in times of war.<sup>19</sup>

Armed suasion, then, consists of "all reactions, political or tactical, elicited by all parties, whether allies, adversaries or neutrals, to the existence, display, manipulation or symbolic use of any instrument of military power, whether or not such reactions reflect any deliberate intent of the deploying party." Naval suasion refers to the effects evoked by sea-based or sea-related forces. Those effects evoked through the deliberate exercise of armed naval suasion intended to elicit a given reaction from a specified nation or group of nations are termed active; the undirected, and hence possibly unintended, reactions evoked by naval deployments maintained on a routine basis are termed latent<sup>20</sup> (see Fig. 1, p. 10).

Latent Naval Suasion. The mere presence of a naval force in a region--regardless of its actual mission, activities,

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 12.





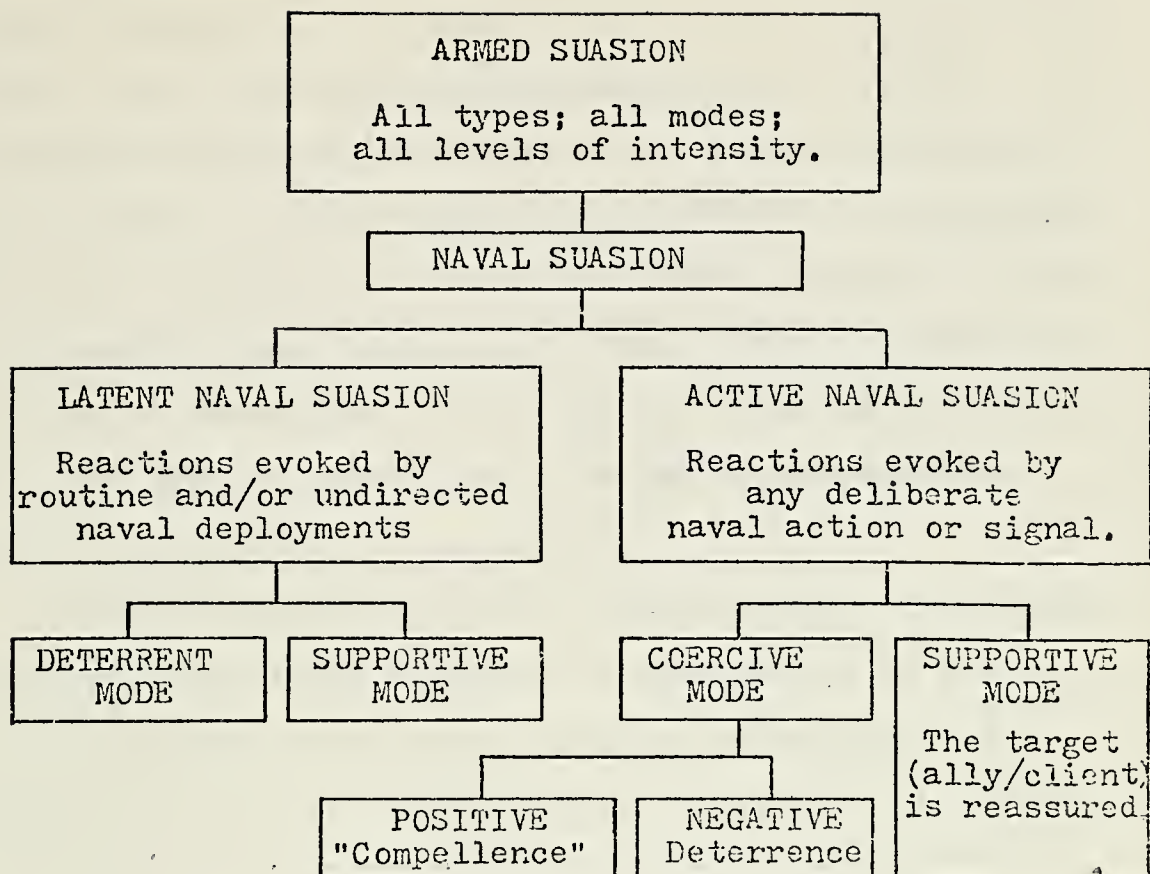


Fig. 1. THE POLITICAL APPLICATION OF NAVAL FORCE: LUTTWAK'S TYPOLOGY. The various forms and modes of naval suasion discusses in the text are depicted in this diagram. After Edward Luttwak, *op. cit.*, p. 5a.

or combat capabilities--exerts a political influence in that it is automatically included as a factor in the calculations of power relationships and probable behaviors of other states in various contingencies made by the nations of the region and by other nations operating within the region.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, latent naval suasion--the undirected, and hence possibly unintended, reactions evoked

<sup>21</sup>Barry M. Blechman, *The Changing Soviet Navy*, Washington, D. C., The Brookings Institution, 1973, p. 20.



by naval deployments maintained on a routine basis--continuously shapes the military dimension of the political environment which policy makers perceive and within which they operate. As the specific naval capabilities deployed are viewed either as potential threats or potential sources of support by those who perceive them, they influence the behavior of those within the range of these capabilities. Thus, one mode of latent naval suasion is deterrent in nature and the other is supportive.<sup>22</sup>

In the deterrent mode, the range of naval capabilities perceived establishes a series of tacit limits on the actions that others deem to be feasible or desirable. The presence of one force impinges upon the freedom of action of adversaries in that the capabilities perceived can always intervene while the intention to do so remains an unknown factor. Deterrent latent suasion is inherently imprecise because of its tacit, rather than explicit, nature; highly flexible in that, in the event of a failure, there is no compulsion to carry out a retaliation that never was threatened overtly; and weak as a deterrent because no rigid commitment to retaliate exists.<sup>23</sup>

In the supportive mode, deployed naval forces serve as a continuous reminder to allies and clients--as well as to potential allies and clients--of the capabilities that

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<sup>22</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.



can be brought to their aid as they provide tangible content, in their ready intervention potential, to any commitments that may have been made. The effects of supportive latent naval suasion usually are beneficial: allies are encouraged to adhere to alliance policies and dissuaded from conciliating adversaries. However, since the support rendered may also broaden the range of options open to allies and clients, the net effect of this mode of suasion may also prove negative.<sup>24</sup>

The indirection inherent in latent naval suasion may, therefore, produce effects which are not desired by the deploying nation. Because of their unimpeded mobility, deployed naval forces entail the potential for inadvertant and unrecognized latent effects--including undesirable ones. However, once such undesirable effects are recognized, ameliorating adjustments may be made quickly and quietly. For example, if a routine fleet transit off another nation's coast is deemed capable of evoking undesirable reactions from that nation's government, the route may be shifted to prevent any such reactions. Thus, the same quality of naval power that is the source of possible political difficulties--its flexibility--may also provide the means of avoiding such difficulties, presuming the negative political repercussions are perceived.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.





Ultimately, the effectiveness of latent naval suasion depends upon others' perceptions of the naval force in question--of its tactical configuration and of the underlying political intent of its movements--which may be, and often are, subject to severe distortions. Whereas, in the case of active naval suasion considered below, the political leaders of the target littoral nation or nations are faced, at the very least, with a definite combination of capabilities in the naval force displayed to or arrayed against them while the intentions of the deploying nation are conveyed to them in one form or another, neither of these conditions obtain in the case of latent effects. Rather, the leaders of the concerned nations must construe the capabilities and intentions of whatever naval forces they are aware of "according to their wits" and the possibilities for distortion are concomitantly vast. As far as the determination of naval capabilities is concerned, political leaders around the world commonly understand more about ground power than air power, and more about the latter than about naval power. Furthermore, in many areas, of which the Middle East certainly is one, few if any of these leaders have access to naval expertise in their own navies "whose officers can sometimes do little more than keep their ships afloat." While, in the realm of political intentions, each leader makes his own judgements based on his own view of the environment and his own values, assessments of naval capabilities, of the significance of various





tactical configurations, and of the nature of the possible threats emanating from the sea require a level of technical knowledge which many possess neither in their governments nor in their own naval forces. Therefore, the relationship between the naval forces deployed and the manner of their deployment, on the one hand, and the suasion effects actually evoked by those forces, on the other, is neither direct nor proportional--even if no account is taken of the various other political or military factors extant in the environment which also impinge upon the perceptions of the observing nations.<sup>26</sup>

Active Naval Suasion. A wide variety of naval activities and behaviors are employed in peacetime for the express purpose of impressing upon other nations the power of the deploying nation<sup>27</sup> in such a way as to further its foreign policy goals.<sup>28</sup> These activities and behaviors, all of which may be categorized as demonstrations, range from occasions of the greatest amiability to very specific threats of violence and war.<sup>29</sup> The movement of warships, their activity while deployed in any particular area, and their ports of call may be used to signal the deploying

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-18.

<sup>27</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>28</sup>Blechman, loc. cit.

<sup>29</sup>Martin, loc. cit.



nation's intentions in various situations--as a means of commitment, as a threat, and so forth. Also, naval forces may perform various acts such as blockade and interposition which, while certainly hostile, incorporate only limited and measured degrees of force. In any of these situations, naval activity is intended to have an impact upon the expectations of the nations directly involved and on those of nations that might consider becoming involved. Naval activity of this kind is usually supplementary to and accompanied by diplomatic or other forms of verbal behavior and serves as an indicator of the seriousness with which these verbal communications should be understood.<sup>30</sup> The traditional maritime powers have long employed naval forces for such purposes in a form of behavior widely referred to as "gunboat diplomacy" which was recently defined as "the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war . . ."<sup>31</sup> by James Cable.

Any application of naval force intended to evoke a specific reaction on the part of others--whether allies, clients, enemies, or neutrals--consists of the exercise of active naval suasion and the reaction actually obtained constitutes the suasion itself. Thus, for example, an attempt to deter an attacker by deploying retaliatory

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<sup>30</sup>Elechman, loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup>James Cable, Gunboat Diplomacy: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1971, p. 21.



forces and issuing appropriate warnings would constitute the exercise of active naval suasion and any deterrence actually achieved thereby would comprise the suasion effect. As previously stated, the political application of naval force is concerned with others' reactions rather than with any objective that may be achieved directly by the application of the force itself.<sup>32</sup> The actions--such demonstrative applications of naval force as those described above--are only inputs; the outputs are the various forms and modes of naval suasion--i.e., the reactions of others--that are, in fact, evoked.<sup>33</sup> The Appendix (pp. 192 to 195) provides a listing and classification of some of these actions and the suasion effects they are meant to evoke. Although this tabulation certainly is not exhaustive, it does suggest the wide range of possible inputs that a naval force may generate in order to evoke the suasion effects desired.<sup>34</sup> All of the inputs listed are associated with the exercise of active naval suasion since latent naval suasion is, of course, undirected.<sup>35</sup> Active naval suasion may be exercised either in a coercive mode intended to deter or compel another nation or in a supportive mode in such a way as to reassure allied or client nations.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 27.





Both forms of coercive suasion, the negative one of deterrence and the positive one of compellence, are subject to the same technical and perceptual requirements: both may be tacit or overt, both may be associated with either private or public warnings, and both are subject to the same psycho-political uncertainties. It has been argued that compellence is more difficult to effect than deterrence because "moves are more difficult to reverse than to prevent in that the moves to be stopped or reversed may have acquired their own 'tactical' and political momentum" and because "it is assumed that compliance with others' demands must be public, thus entailing additional losses in . . . prestige." However, although "tactical momentum may indeed occur in many cases," political momentum is largely conditioned by whether or not the compellence is, in fact, made public. "It is apparent that overt, publicly announced, deterrence may be more difficult for the target party to comply with than covert compellence, covertly complied with."<sup>37</sup>

Also performed continuously in a latent form, the active variety of supportive naval suasion is an important aspect of the political application of naval force. Often involving the deployment of the symbolic warship, the presence of which asserts no local military superiority and the combat capabilities of which may not even be

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-28.





relevant to the situation, the effectiveness of such active supportive naval suasion depends upon the perception of the symbolic ship as representative of and proportional to the national power which will be used, if necessary, rather than as representative of and proportional to naval power alone. One element of national power is, of course, naval power, but the latter need not be the salient source of national power, the limits of which it does not define, in order to symbolize that power. An inherent danger is that supportive suasion may encourage the supported nation "to go too far" and that the supporting nation may have to restrain its ally or client. In the case of the active form of supportive suasion, this danger is easier to recognize and, hence, easier to control.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the flexibility of naval forces enables the deploying nation to disabuse such an ally or client by ordering the force out of the area or by merely threatening withdrawal of support afforded by the presence of the force.<sup>39</sup>

Whatever the mode of active naval suasion exercised, the sine qua non for the successful evocation of the desired response is the target nation's perception of the force deployed--both its tactical capabilities and, more importantly, the political intentions which it represents.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-37.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 39.



Perceptual Determinants. Perhaps foremost among the factors which determine the perceptions all-important to the political application of naval force is the influence of historical experience on current outlook. Also important--because "the perceived balance of forces that determines the outcome of 'peacetime' confrontations can only be construed by men in terms of the predicted outcomes of putative battle(s), and it is such predictions that determine political attitudes, and therefore decisions"<sup>40</sup>--appear to be assessments based upon the observable capabilities of a naval power and its reputation, including its apparent disposition to use those capabilities, established through the media--especially insofar as superpower efforts to influence the perceptions of the Third World are concerned."

In the Middle East, visible naval power appears to have a special significance in the frame of reference of those to be persuaded<sup>41</sup> because of its prominence in the modern history of the region. During the imperialist era of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, "showing the flag" by any one navy carried with it the implication of substantial national power and of possible use of naval coercion should a local government fail to

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Trumbull Howe, Multicrises: Sea Power and Global Politics in the Missile Age, Cambridge, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1971, p. 20.



respond as the visiting fleet expected.<sup>42</sup> Even today, although blatant naval diplomacy may prove counterproductive in an era of burgeoning indigenous nationalism, perceptions in the Middle East may exaggerate the political implications of either the visible presence or obvious absence of superpower naval units.

While the superpowers may be able to make fairly accurate estimates of each other's naval power through the application of various sophisticated imagery and electronic intelligence techniques, the perceptions of those who neither possess such capabilities nor have access to data derived therefrom must necessarily be based upon the more visible characteristics of naval forces rather than upon the not-so-visible elements which are so important to the viability of modern naval forces--e.g., the application of technology to sensor and weapon systems as well as the less tangible "dynamic" variables such as seamanship, maintenance levels, and crew performance under stress. Consequently, nations interested in the political application of naval force must resolve the problem of visibility versus viability when designing and deploying naval units and force structures intended as implements of their foreign policies in such a way as to strike a balance between these

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<sup>42</sup>Howard Wriggins, "U. S. Interests in the Indian Ocean," in Alvin J. Cottrell and R. M. Burrell, eds., The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Significance, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 307.





attributes that ensures perception of their deployed naval forces as credible by all.<sup>43</sup>

Often, in the absence of adequate technical data, the perceptions of Third World political leaders which are so important to the political application of naval force are influenced by whatever public media from around the world to which they have access. While the more sophisticated may recognize the extremes of propagandistic bombast and self-denigration transmitted by these media for what they are and, mindful of the motivating circumstances which prevail, discount them, such messages, nonetheless, tend to intrude on perceptions of naval strength.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, because the media do reflect the overall political mood of a nation fairly accurately,<sup>45</sup> perceptions of political intentions and national resolve, so important to the exercise of naval suasion, are also influenced.

Luttwak's typology certainly cannot be considered the "last word" in analytical tools. However, in a field of inquiry which is in the early stages of its evolution, it appears to be the most thoroughly developed and useful of such tools yet to have been produced<sup>46</sup> and, with the fact

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<sup>43</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., pp. 41-43.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-48.

<sup>45</sup>Edward Luttwak, "The Political Application of Naval Force: A Precis," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 3 (November-December 1973), p. 39.

<sup>46</sup>The search for principles governing the political





that limitations necessarily exist in both the typology and its adaptation as a conceptual framework herein firmly in mind, it will be applied as appropriate throughout the present study.

#### THE STUDY: CONSTRAINTS

Any study based on the foreign policy role of the Soviet Navy in the Middle East immediately encounters constraints which preclude results approaching complete success. Significant among--and representative of--these constraints are the paucity of available information concerning both the decisional antecedents and the behavioral manifestations of that policy and the lack of a definitive understanding of the relationship between the two.

The lack of information was characterized recently by Uri Ra'anana who, in commenting on the press and official

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application of naval force has produced one other recent categorization of the way in which "the use or threat of use of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war . . .," (Cable, loc. cit.) may be employed as an instrument of foreign policy in James Cable's Gunboat Diplomacy. This writer, however, agrees with Luttwak (op. cit., p. 4) that Cable's ". . . definitions [of] 'Definitive,' 'Purposeful,' 'Catalytic,' and 'Expressive' force . . . intermingle functional and intensity criteria [and are] more useful for descriptive than for analytical purposes where the need is not to aggregate but rather the contrary." Even if, as is sometimes said, "the great sin of American academics is overcategorization" (Captain J. R. Hill, Royal Navy, "Maritime Forces in Confrontation," in Major-General J. L. Moulton, Royal Marines, Ret., ed., Brassey's Annual: 1972, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 27), it is essential, when confronted with a new and complex problem, to bring some order out of chaos and make the problem manageable as Luttwak has done.



literature of the closed Soviet society, observed that one may:<sup>47</sup>

. . . search in vain for a Russian equivalent of "The Pentagon Papers," of the minutes of Washington's "Special Action Group" on the Indo-Pakistani crisis, or some other publication of contemporary, classified documents that may throw light upon a superpower's decision-making process.

As a consequence of this lack of information, Western knowledge of the Soviet Navy's foreign policy role in the Middle East and elsewhere remains, at best, imperfect. That which is known derives primarily from what is more or less readily observable--the statements and actions (i.e., naval operations) which are the end products of the policy process. Whatever may be learned from such observable phenomena about the antecedent decisions which are made or policies which are articulated, therefore, necessarily relies almost exclusively upon inference rather than empirical evidence.<sup>48</sup> Explanations partially based upon such information must be developed with caution. For example, it cannot be assumed that observed naval capabilities reflect foreign policy intentions. Indeed, because of the long lead time involved in procuring and deploying naval forces, the foreign policy orientation that informed the development of a specific capability may have lost validity or

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<sup>47</sup>Uri Ra'anan, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1969-73," Midstream, Vol. XIX, No. 12 (December 1973), p. 24

<sup>48</sup>Robert G. Weinland, The Changing Mission of the Soviet Navy, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, November 1971, p. 4.



political support by the time that capability is deployed and observed.<sup>49</sup> The problem of information is further exacerbated by the fact that, for obvious reasons, most of what is known about the subject does not appear in the public record and by the fact that it is difficult to assess the quality of that which does.<sup>50</sup>

Even if complete information concerning Soviet naval behavior were available, the problem of determining when and to what degree that behavior resulted from and implemented the decisions of Kremlin policy makers would remain. In other words, it cannot be assumed that all Soviet naval operations are conducted with foreign policy objectives in mind--that a linear-causal relationship exists between the two. Consequently, in order to approach meaningful conclusions concerning the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East, it is essential to recognize, as Robert G. Weinland observed:<sup>51</sup>

first, that some portion of their [i.e., the Soviet Navy's] behavior is the result of explicit decisions of the Soviet government, some the result of general naval policies, and some the result of the initiative of local commanders--and we often can't tell which is which; and

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<sup>49</sup>Franklyn Griffiths, "Forward Deployment and Foreign Policy," in Michael McGwire, ed., Soviet Naval Developments: Context and Capability, Halifax, Dalhousie University, 1973, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Weinland, loc. cit.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 5.



second, . . . that much of their behavior cannot be explained as the result of some . . . rationally articulated and implemented policy, since it is the product of physical and organizational constraints--some of which we can identify, and some of which we cannot.

Within the bounds set by these constraints and others, the present study attempts to transcend mere descriptive narrative with analysis, to the extent possible, of the Soviet Navy's foreign policy role and its meaning for American foreign policy within the time period and the region under consideration.





CHAPTER II  
THE SUPERPOWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
A NAVAL PERSPECTIVE

Significant deployments of modern United States and Soviet naval forces in the waters of the Middle East--long the domain of British sea power--are essentially post-World War II phenomena and, in the case of the Soviet Navy, a recent occurrence indeed. While the U. S. Navy initially deployed in the region as a political force and subsequently acquired an additional mission of strategic offense, the Soviet Navy in the Middle East experienced a very different evolution. The necessity of responding to and neutralizing the United States' sea-based strategic strike capability originally dictated the establishment of a Soviet naval presence in the waters of the Middle East only a decade ago. Although the strategic defense of the homeland against attack from the sea has been and probably continues to be its primary mission in these waters, the Soviet Navy has evolved, in the past several years, into both an important determinant and an increasingly significant active instrument of the USSR's foreign policy throughout the region.

Any effort to explore some of the past, present, and possible future relationships between the forward deployment



of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East and the foreign policies of the superpowers vis-a-vis the region require a substantive--geographical, historical, and political--perspective, as well as a conceptual one, which facilitates understanding. This chapter provides such a perspective: (1) by defining the nature of the Middle East as a naval environment; (2) by surveying briefly the relationships between American and Soviet foreign policies toward and naval developments within this environment from the end of World War II through the initial stages of the forward deployment of the Soviet Navy in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean; and (3) by approaching in general terms the interests, objectives, and foreign policies of both superpowers vis-a-vis the region which comprise a significant portion of the policy environment within which their navies are employed and interact.

#### THE MIDDLE EAST AS A NAVAL ENVIRONMENT

No universally accepted standard boundary delimitation exists by which the region called the Middle East--an area "focused on a tricontinental node reflecting the coastal configurations of Africa, Europe, and Asia where they most nearly converge"<sup>1</sup> important historically as "the strategic

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<sup>1</sup>G. Etzel Percy, The Middle East--An Indefinable Region, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964, p. 7.



crossroads of three continents"<sup>2</sup>--is precisely located geographically<sup>3</sup> by scholars, strategists, diplomats, and others concerned with the area. Rather, the term "Middle East" somewhat ambiguously describes an area of great diversity and political instability<sup>4</sup> of no little current significance in international affairs which, while possessing certain elements of physical and social unity,<sup>5</sup> owes most of its regional character to other than indigenous factors.<sup>6</sup> As evidenced by such Western appellations as the "Near East" and the now more commonly used "Middle East" which indicate the location of the region relative to Europe, these lands and waters are included in a single term merely because they are "near to" or "in the middle of" other regions.<sup>7</sup> According to Don Peretz:<sup>8</sup>

Whatever unity does exist within the region today is largely functional: it is a unity in relation to the outside world rather than an inherent unity arising from similar geographic and social conditions or from a recent common history.

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<sup>2</sup>William B. Quandt, United States Policy in the Middle East: Constraints and Choices, Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, February 1970, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Pearcy, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Don Peretz, The Middle East Today (Second Edition), New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>W. B. Fisher, The Middle East: A Physical, Social, and Regional Geography (Sixth Edition), London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1971, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.





Yet, for the purposes of the present study, a somewhat more definite concept of the Middle East as a naval environment should be delineated. This concept (see Fig. 2, p. 30), based upon prior applications of regional identification techniques employed by geographers<sup>9</sup> rather than purely arbitrary delimitation, describes the naval environment associated with the term "Middle East"--a term reportedly first employed by the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan in 1902 to denote the vast area between Arabia and India centering upon the Persian Gulf.<sup>10</sup> In terms of specific political units, then, the Middle East may be considered to directly include Turkey, Iraq, and Iran (the so-called "Northern Tier" countries); Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan (the eastern Mediterranean, "Levant,"<sup>4</sup> or "Fertile Crescent" countries); the Arabian Peninsula entities of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Southern Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates; and, because of its close relationship to the Arab nations to the east, Libya.<sup>11</sup>

A naval view of this region tends to make it an open one, serving to integrate rather than to isolate surrounding areas. Accordingly, the Middle East may be defined in

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<sup>9</sup>E.g., Percy, op. cit., pp. 1-12; Fisher, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>Klieman, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>Percy, op. cit., p. 6.





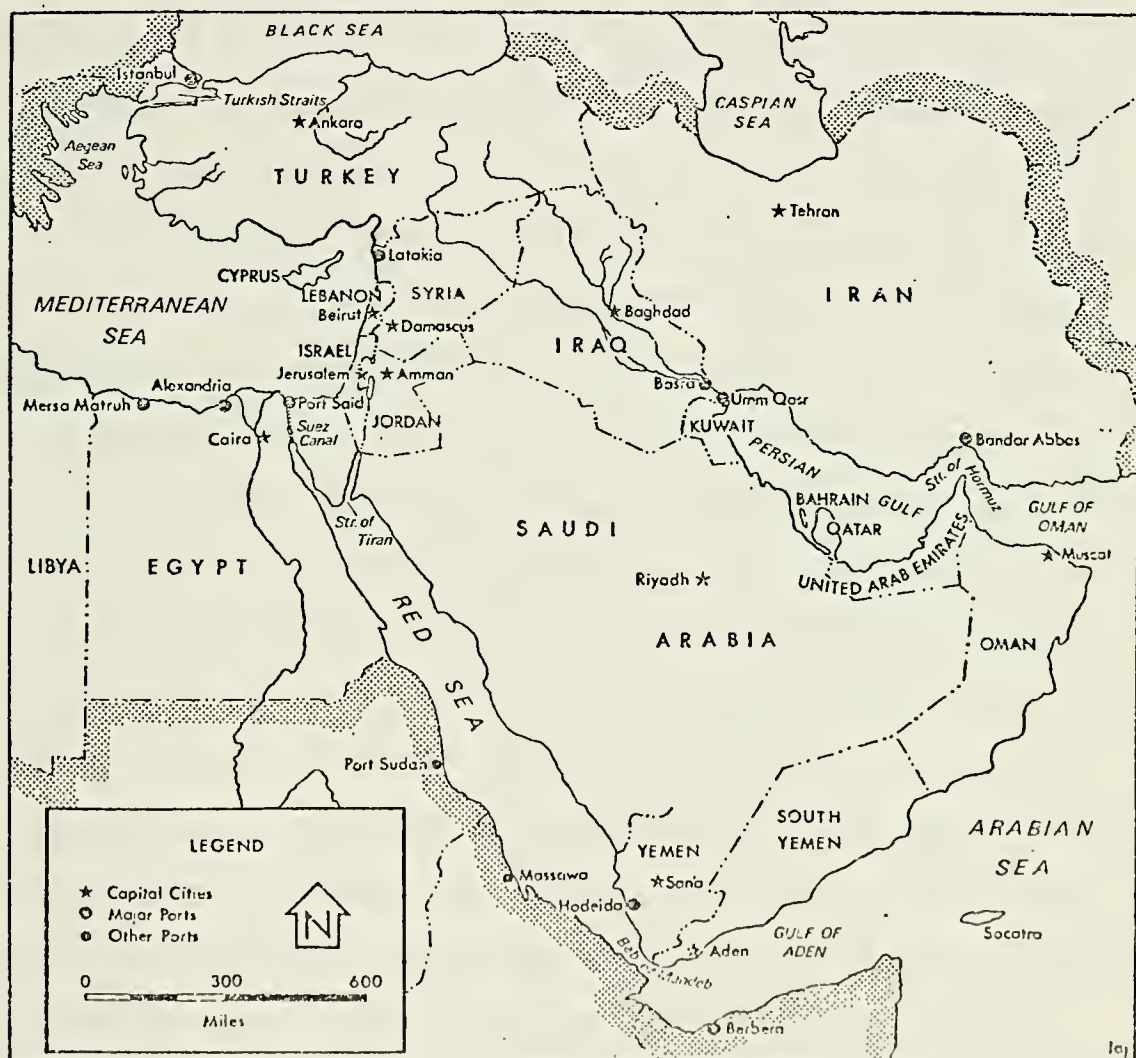


Fig. 2. THE MIDDLE EAST AS A NAVAL ENVIRONMENT. These maps depict the relationship of the Middle East to important superpower naval influences and locate significant features--oceans and seas, straits, gulfs, ports, etc.--mentioned in the text.



naval terms as that area bounded by, and in most cases littoral to, the Black Sea, the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Persian Gulf. When conceived of as bridges rather than barriers to political interaction, these five bodies of water indirectly affect neighboring riparian countries: the Soviet Union to the north; the North African nations of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria to the west; the Sudan and the Horn of Africa countries to the south; and, finally, the Indian subcontinent to the east.<sup>12</sup>

The juxtaposition of penetrating water areas and land masses which characterize the Middle East creates a geographical situation of naval significance not found to this extent anywhere else in the world. Not only the Mediterranean Sea but the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and their tributary waters provide easy access for sea-based forces deep into the region's landmass.<sup>13</sup> The recent increased interest of the superpowers in the waters, littorals, and narrow straits of the Middle East reinforces this naval perspective. Especially significant are five narrow straits which connect the seas and gulfs of the region with each other and with the oceans and which have long been a matter of international concern and controversy. The Turkish Straits--consisting of the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara,

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<sup>12</sup>Klicman, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>13</sup>Pearcy, op. cit., p. 7.



and the Bosphorus--are the only outlet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean<sup>15</sup> and are, therefore, of paramount importance to the Soviet Navy which deploys most of its Mediterranean squadron from its Black Sea Fleet headquarters at Sevastopol<sup>16</sup> on the Crimean Peninsula. Controlled by Turkey and administered in accordance with the terms of the 1936 Montreux Convention, they are, politically, the most quiescent of the Middle Eastern straits.<sup>17</sup> For 98 years after its completion in 1869, the Suez Canal provided the most convenient and rapid water route from Europe to the East.<sup>18</sup> Once reopened, it will greatly enhance the Soviet Navy's access to the Middle East "east of Suez" and to the Indian Ocean;<sup>19</sup> however, unless expensive enlargement to accommodate modern supertankers is accomplished, it probably will not regain its former importance to the world oil trade. As the entrance to the Gulf of Aquaba, the Strait of Tiran is of little importance to world shipping but vital to the interests of Israel and Jordan

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<sup>15</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, Issues in the Middle East, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup>Siegfried Breyer, Guide to the Soviet Navy, Annapolis, United States Naval Institute, 1970, pp. 9-10.

<sup>17</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, loc. cit.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Alvin J. Cottrell, "Implications of Reopening the Canal for the Area East and South of Suez," The New Middle East, No. 34 (July 1971), pp. 29-31.





whose southern ports--Israel's only outlet to the East and Jordan's only seaport--lie at the head of the Gulf.<sup>20</sup> Fear of its blockade was one of the major motives for the Israeli attack on Egypt in October, 1956,<sup>21</sup> and Egypt's 1967 closure of the strait to Israeli shipping was a major factor in triggering the Six Day War during which Israel seized the area.<sup>22</sup> Bab el Mandeb, which joins the Red Sea at its southern end to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, also causes much anxiety for Israel because its closure to Israeli shipping would have the same effect as the closure of the Strait of Tiran. Finally, the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf with the Indian Ocean, is a choke-point transited by over 60 ships each day carrying over 50 percent of the world's oil requirements.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE U. S. NAVY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The United States had no significant political or strategic interest in the Middle East until World War II made involvement, as part of the Allied grand strategy, inevitable.<sup>24</sup> However, despite the magnitude of American naval power during the war, neither U. S. Navy battleships nor

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<sup>20</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Malcolm W. Cagle, "The Gulf of Aqaba--Trigger for Conflict," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 85, No. 1 (January 1959), p. 75.

<sup>22</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 33.





aircraft carriers ever entered the Mediterranean Sea--a preserve of the Royal Navy--with the single exception of the carrier USS Wasp which delivered a load of British "Spitfires" to Malta.<sup>25</sup> After the war, Soviet pressure on the region and the decline of British power resulted in a new American involvement.

Deployment in the Mediterranean Sea. When, in 1946, Joseph Stalin attempted to force Turkey to accept the USSR as a senior partner in the "defense" of the Turkish Straits, by which he meant to assure the Soviet Navy unrestricted transit between the Black and the Mediterranean seas while denying that right to all other major powers,<sup>26</sup> the post-war deployment of American naval power in the Middle East, was inaugurated by the visit of the battleship USS Missouri to Istanbul in March of that year.<sup>27</sup> Ostensibly sent by President Harry S. Truman on a good will mission to return the remains of the Turkish ambassador to the United States who had died months before,<sup>28</sup> the Missouri and her escorts served as a symbol of American power perceived by the Turks as a commitment to protect the status quo. As a result,

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<sup>25</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>26</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, Changing Military Perspectives in the Middle East, Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, September 1970, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>28</sup>Ernest McNeill Eller, The Soviet Sea Challenge, Chicago, Cowles Book Company, Inc., 1971, p. 93.



the Turks felt free to reject Stalin's demands for a renegotiation of the Montreux Convention, assuming that they had found a new protector in the West.<sup>29</sup>

In a brilliant diplomatic gesture, President Truman had exercised naval suasion intended to support the Turks and to deter Moscow. While less sophisticated observers than the Turks or Soviets may have been impressed by the sheer size and formidable guns of the Missouri, this symbolic ship represented the national power of the United States, rather than naval power as such, and was proportional to the former rather than to the latter. Indeed, the specific tactical capabilities of the battleship, or of naval capabilities of any kind, were of doubtful military relevance to the crisis because the Soviet threat to Turkey would have emanated from Moscow's large ground forces and associated tactical air power which could have been deployed on the Turco-Bulgarian and Turco-Soviet borders. It is not known what impression the Missouri made on Stalin's government. Moscow's diplomatic and propaganda pressure on Ankara continued, as did Turkish resistance thereto, even after the U. S. Navy task force built around the aircraft carrier USS Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived on the scene six months later. However, by the end of 1946, before the formal enunciation of the Truman Doctrine and its endorsement by Congress, the Soviet

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<sup>29</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., pp. 34-35.



political offensive had dwindled.<sup>30</sup> The Missouri's visit to a menaced Greece immediately after departing Istanbul on April 9, 1946, evoked similar responses. Her visit to Piraeus, Athen's seaport, the following day was heralded by the Greek newspaper Acropolis: "The Russian shadow is cast over the Balkans. So America comes and tells us 'Sit tight and don't worry. I'm with you.'"<sup>31</sup>

Washington, alarmed by the rapid fall of the Eastern European nations to Soviet domination and by continued Soviet pressures on the Middle East as well as Britain's admitted inability to meet its traditional responsibilities in the region, formulated and issued the Truman Doctrine in 1947.<sup>32</sup> This doctrine, by offering "to uphold the independence and integrity of all states beyond the Soviet" ambit against the threat of direct or indirect Communist aggression,"<sup>33</sup> began the policy of "long term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment"<sup>34</sup> designed to surround the Soviet Union with nations allied to and supported by the United States and pledged to resist Soviet expansion<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-35.

<sup>31</sup>U. S. Navy, History of Ships Named Missouri, Washington, D. C., no date, pp. 12-13.

<sup>32</sup>Spanier, op. cit., pp. 27-30, 38-39.

<sup>33</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1969, p. 70.

<sup>34</sup>Spanier, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

<sup>35</sup>P. M. Dadant, American and Soviet Defense Systems Vis-A-Vis the Middle East, Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, July 1970, p. 6.





which characterized American foreign policy for the next two decades. In the Middle East, this containment policy took several forms in the late 1940s and early 1950s, including the establishment and permanent stationing of the U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea in 1948 and, under the terms of bilateral agreements between the United States and a number of Middle Eastern countries, deployment of American land-based strategic strike aircraft along the southern frontiers of the USSR--a combination which brought most of European Russia and western Siberia within range of atomic attack<sup>36</sup> and increased concern to the Kremlin.

Two months after British and French military leadership in the region ended suddenly in November, 1956, when the United States compelled them to abandon their unfinished Suez campaign, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed the Eisenhower Doctrine which verbalized the principle of unilateral American protection of existing regimes in the Middle East.<sup>37</sup> According to that doctrine, approved by Congress in March, 1957, the United States was "prepared to use armed force to assist any nation or group of nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any

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<sup>36</sup>Oles M. Smolansky, "The Political Background to Soviet Naval Policy in the Mediterranean," in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 327-328.

<sup>37</sup>Hurewitz, Changing Military Perspectives in the Middle East, p. 8.





country controlled by international Communism."<sup>38</sup>

The application of the Eisenhower Doctrine was almost immediate. When, in April, 1957, King Hussein of Jordan charged that "international Communism" was responsible for an internal crisis and efforts to overthrow him,<sup>39</sup> a task force of the Sixth Fleet, including the attack carrier USS Forrestal and an amphibious contingent of 1,800 Marines, was dispatched to the eastern Mediterranean<sup>40</sup> in an act of naval suasion designed to underline the United States' announcement that it regarded "the independence and integrity of Jordan as vital"<sup>41</sup> and to help Hussein cling to his throne.<sup>42</sup> At the height of a Syrian-Turkish crisis the following October, American naval power was again applied when the United States delayed the withdrawal of several ships that had joined the Sixth Fleet for exercises<sup>43</sup> while, simultaneously, the State Department warned the Soviet Union, Syria's sponsor, to "be under no illusion that the United States, Turkey's friend and ally, takes lightly its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty and is determined to carry out the national policy expressed

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<sup>38</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Spanier, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>40</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>41</sup>Spanier, loc. cit.

<sup>42</sup>Hurewitz, loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.



in the Joint Congressional Resolution on the Middle East"<sup>44</sup> (the Eisenhower Doctrine). In the summer of 1958, at the request of President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon,<sup>45</sup> a Sixth Fleet task force of some 70 ships, including three attack carriers,<sup>46</sup> landed U. S. Marines under the Eisenhower Doctrine to, in Chamoun's words, "preserve order" and to help Lebanon "defend itself against indirect aggression" which--following General Abdul Kassem's destruction of the pro-Western Hashemite regime of Iraq on July 14--threatened to throw the country completely into the radical Arab camp.<sup>47</sup>

Toward the end of the 1950s, technological advances and growing nationalist agitation presaged both the demise of American land bases in the Middle East and an increased reliance on the Sixth Fleet which assumed an expanded strategic strike role in addition to its traditional political one. As a result, the Sixth Fleet--which, in the past decade and a half, has averaged about 50 ships organized into: two task forces, each built around an attack aircraft carrier and its embarked air wing; an amphibious force including a battalion landing team of U. S. Marines; attack, and, since 1963, ballistic missile submarine units; and mobile support forces--serves, in effect, as a roving base, projecting both American influence and power across the

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<sup>44</sup>U. S. Department of State, Bulletin, Vol. XXXVII, No. 957 (October 28, 1957), p. 674.

<sup>45</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>46</sup>Eller, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>47</sup>Peretz, loc. cit.



Mediterranean and the Middle East.<sup>48</sup>

Deployment in the Persian Gulf. During the political and social chaos that followed the withdrawal of British and Soviet forces after World War II, Iran, like Turkey and Greece, was threatened by insurrection.<sup>49</sup> Among the right- and left-wing extremist and tribal autonomy movements which emerged,<sup>50</sup> the greatest threat to the young Shah Muhammed Reza Pahlavi's government was the Tudeh Party--founded by the Soviets shortly after their occupation of Iran's northern provinces, including Tehran, in 1941--which had benefited from the problems of the country and had tried to assassinate the Shah. Late in 1949, the Shah flew to Washington and appealed to President Truman for help.<sup>51</sup>

Grouping Iran with Turkey and Greece under the Truman Doctrine, Washington detached a seaplane tender and two destroyers from the Sixth Fleet to create the U. S. Middle East Force which was deployed to the Persian Gulf for Tehran's reassurance.<sup>52</sup> For the past quarter century, this three-ship force has carried out its essentially

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<sup>48</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 9-11; Dadant, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>49</sup>Lawrence Griswold, "The Bear on the Roof: Soviet Power Encircles Persian Gulf," reprinted in U. S. Congress, House, U. S. Interests in and Policy Toward the Persian Gulf, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 199.

<sup>50</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 437.

<sup>51</sup>Griswold, loc. cit.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-201.





political mission of maintaining a "friendly presence" symbolic of continued American interest in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the western Indian Ocean through periodic visits to friendly ports throughout the region. Although, through an informal arrangement with the British, the Middle East Force obtained access to the logistic support facilities of the Royal Navy's base on Bahrain, all ships assigned to the force served on a rotational basis until the flagship, the USS Valcour, was homeported there in 1966.<sup>53</sup> The two destroyers assigned to the force were deployed from the Sixth Fleet until the Suez Canal was closed in 1967<sup>54</sup> and now usually rotate to the Persian Gulf from the Atlantic Fleet.<sup>55</sup>

#### THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOVIET NAVY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

At the end of World War II, the Middle East was of relatively little interest to a Soviet Union which was extensively preoccupied with the problems of post-war settlement and consolidation of its control in Eastern Europe and the Far East.<sup>56</sup> Only recovering from the shock of Hitler's invasion, Moscow's "machinations in the Balkans

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<sup>53</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

<sup>54</sup>Alvin J. Cottrell, "The United States and the Future of the Gulf After the Bahrain Agreement," The New Middle East, No. 22 (July 1970), p. 20.

<sup>55</sup>U. S. Congress, House, loc. cit.

<sup>56</sup>Smolansky, op. cit., pp. 326-327.





and the Middle East were as much a factor of political momentum as real military power."<sup>57</sup> When the demands pressed by Stalin which reflected Soviet interests in the region--notably, control of the Turkish Straits described above and continued control over northern Iran--encountered stiff Western resistance, the USSR quietly backed down.<sup>58</sup>

By late 1954 and early 1955, however, the new Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, had decided to thwart Washington's plan to advance its containment of the Soviet Union through a new British-sponsored, American-backed regional defense alliance, later known as the Baghdad Pact, by establishing close relations with those Arab states which had, for reasons of their own, refused to join.<sup>59</sup> Moscow soon implemented this new foreign policy toward the Middle East--a foreign policy based primarily upon its extra-regional requirements for national security rather than upon its interests in the region per se--when Egypt offered it the opportunity in 1955, simply by purchasing Soviet weapons, to disrupt the Western plan to link the Northern Tier states in a military alliance along the southern periphery of the USSR.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>58</sup>Smolansky, loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>60</sup>A. S. Becker and A. L. Horelick, Soviet Policy in the Middle East, Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, September 1970, p. 8.



But, even as the Soviet Union established itself in the Middle East--particularly in Egypt, Syria and, after 1958, Iraq<sup>61</sup>--and became increasingly involved in the internal affairs of its new clients and the Arab world,<sup>62</sup> events and technology were changing the nature of the threat which this policy had been designed to counter. These changes would soon force a mediocre Soviet Navy, a navy whose operations during World War II had been confined largely to enclosed home waters and which remained substantially oriented toward its traditional mission of supporting the seaward flanks of Moscow's ground forces and defending Soviet coastal areas,<sup>63</sup> to modernize and go to sea.

Deployment in the Mediterranean Sea. By the late 1950s, the strategic threat to the USSR emanating from the Baghdad Pact countries and other American allies in the Middle East had been significantly reduced, not because of Khrushchev's political offensive,<sup>64</sup> but as a result of technological advances which moved much of the West's strategic strike capability from land bases in the Middle East to the

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<sup>61</sup>Smolansky, loc. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Becker and Horelick, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>63</sup>Thomas W. Wolfe, "Soviet Naval Interaction with the United States and its Influence on Soviet Naval Development," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>64</sup>Smolansky, op. cit., pp. 328-329.



seas surrounding the region.<sup>65</sup> The development and deployment aboard Sixth Fleet aircraft carriers during this time of attack aircraft with longer ranges and enhanced nuclear weapon delivery capabilities increased Soviet fears of the threat from the sea.<sup>66</sup> However, from the early 1950s, Moscow had based a Soviet Navy submarine squadron at Vallona, Albania;<sup>67</sup> apparently it was not, at this stage, deemed expedient or possible to deploy a surface fleet forward in the Mediterranean merely to cope with the carrier threat.<sup>68</sup> Withdrawal of this submarine squadron in 1961 following Albania's adoption of pro-Chinese policies<sup>69</sup> during the first public airing of the Sino-Soviet dispute coupled with the anticipated deployment of the new Polaris A2 submarine launched ballistic missile to the eastern Mediterranean which materialized in 1963 forced the defensive forward deployment of the Soviet Navy into the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>70</sup> By 1964, Moscow had officially recognized

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<sup>65</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy--Prospects for the Seventies," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 411.

<sup>66</sup>Geoffrey Jukes, The Indian Ocean in Soviet Naval Policy, London, The Institute for Strategic Studies, May 1972, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup>Curt Gasteyger, Conflict and Tension in the Mediterranean, London, The Institute for Strategic Studies, September 1968, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup>Jukes, loc. cit.

<sup>69</sup>Gasteyger, loc. cit.

<sup>70</sup>Jukes, op. cit., pp. 5-6.





the U. S. Navy's ballistic missile submarine as the primary naval threat to the Soviet Union.<sup>71</sup> Although any early solution to the missile threat was precluded by the extraordinary technological difficulties involved in the detection and, if necessary, destruction of nuclear submarines, any Soviet hope of the eventual neutralization of this latest addition to the American nuclear arsenal as well as of the impressive nuclear strike capability of the Sixth Fleet's attack carriers depended to a great extent on Moscow's ability to establish and maintain a naval and air presence in the Mediterranean.<sup>72</sup> This presence began haltingly with units of the Black Sea Fleet entering the Mediterranean in 1963 to be followed by the elements of a squadron in 1964<sup>73</sup> and then the continuous deployment of surface warships the following year.<sup>74</sup> The cautious nature of this new departure for the Soviet Navy was evident in its seasonal fluctuations: the Soviet ships filtered in during the spring, reached a peak in the summer, and by Christmas had mostly returned home.<sup>75</sup> While the Soviet

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<sup>71</sup>Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice, Annapolis, United States Naval Institute, 1968, pp. 96-97.

<sup>72</sup>Smolansky, op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>73</sup>John Erickson, Soviet Military Power, London, Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, 1971, p. 55.

<sup>74</sup>Blechman, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>75</sup>Laurence W. Martin, "The Changing Military Balance," in J. C. Hurewitz, ed., Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1969, pp. 62-63.





Navy's forward deployment could also serve the political purpose of "showing the flag" in support of Khrushchev's Arab clients, its primary raison d'etre must have been the emergence of the eastern Mediterranean as an area from which a serious strategic threat was posed to the industrial heartland of the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

Deployment in the Indian Ocean. The extension of the Soviet Navy's forward deployment in the waters of the Middle East to the Indian Ocean beginning in 1968 appears to have been motivated primarily by the same extra-regional concern for strategic defense that powered its entry into the Mediterranean Sea in 1964.<sup>77</sup> Although no United States ballistic missile submarines had yet deployed to the Indian Ocean, the fact that the advantages of stationing submarines carrying the new long-range Polaris A3 missile in the northwestern corner of the Indian Ocean--the Arabian Sea--would make such a deployment highly likely to occur was recognized by Soviet naval analysts no later than 1964. Alerted to this new potential danger, the Kremlin debated response either by the deployment of a counterveiling Soviet naval presence designed to reduce the attractiveness of the Arabian Sea to the U. S. Navy or through pursuit of an agreement to prevent deployment of nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Jukes, loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup>Oles M. Smolansky, "Soviet Entry into the Indian Ocean: An Analysis," in Cottrell and Burrell, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

<sup>78</sup>Jukes, op. cit., pp. 6-7.



Because of the impact which Soviet naval expansion into yet another sea area would have on the defense budget, Khrushchev's new successors, General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev and Premier Alexi Kosygin, probably did not react favorably to Soviet Navy proposals for a presence in the Indian Ocean. However, once Moscow's December, 1964, proposal for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean was rejected by the United Nations,<sup>79</sup> the eventual deployment of the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean was virtually assured.

That neither the Soviet Union nor the United States actually effected a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean for the next three years is explained by events and conditions elsewhere. Moscow was preoccupied with building up its Mediterranean squadron to counter an existing, rather than potential, threat and the closure of the Suez Canal as a result of the Six Day War precluded the development and maintenance of an Indian Ocean presence via that most convenient and economical of accesses. Escalation of the American involvement in Vietnam increased the hostility of most non-aligned Indian Ocean littoral countries to an American ballistic missile submarine presence<sup>80</sup> which, without a permanently stationed tender in the area, would actually detract from the United States' deterrent posture

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-10.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 10.



in the area by significantly reducing on-station time.<sup>81</sup>

During this time, however, the all-important Soviet perception of the American intention to station ballistic missile submarines in the Arabian Sea kept plans to deploy the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean alive. Moscow's anxieties over this eventuality were reinforced by such events as the 1966 Anglo-American agreement "allowing the United States to build and use facilities in the British Indian Ocean Territory" on the island of Diego Garcia which could support such a presence and improvements in the sea-based missile delivery capability which involved the projected deployment of the new Poseidon missile in the Indian Ocean in the 1970s.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, it was not Western withdrawal--the Labor government's famous decision to terminate the operational British military presence "east of Suez" and President Nixon's expressed desire to avoid any further American military involvement in the mainland of Asia<sup>83</sup>--which was the major consideration impelling the establishment of a Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean, but the desire to establish a credible defense posture against potential submarine launched ballistic missile strikes from the Arabian Sea

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<sup>81</sup>James M. McConnell, The Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, August 1971, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup>Smolansky, loc. cit.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 337.





which is "second only to the Eastern Mediterranean in terms of target coverage" of Soviet territory.<sup>84</sup>

#### THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE SUPERPOWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

It is often difficult to ascertain the nature of "a foreign policy" which usually "consists of a series of decisions expressed through policy statements as well as direct actions"<sup>85</sup> which are often "internally inconsistent," "vaguely related,"<sup>86</sup> and subject to innumerable interpretations. While detailed analysis of foreign policies (systems of activities evolved by national actors for influencing the behavior of other nations and for adjusting a nation's own activities to the international environment<sup>87</sup> which are dynamic rather than static, varying over time as they initiate or respond to change in pursuit of perceived interests and objectives) is beyond the scope of the present study, a brief description of the interests and objectives which inform and reflect the general nature of the foreign policies of the superpowers in the Middle East is in order.

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>85</sup>William D. Coplin, Introduction to International Politics: A Theoretical Overview, Chicago, Markham Publishing Company, 1971, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup>Roger Hilsman, To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy, Garden city, N. Y., Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967, p. 5.

<sup>87</sup>George Modelski, A Theory of Foreign Policy, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, p. 7.





American Foreign Policy in the Middle East. Although, since the end of World War II when a Middle East policy began to be formulated, United States objectives in the region have remained essentially constant, Washington's policy toward the Middle East has been subject to a process of constant adjustment to changing conditions within the region as well as to alterations in both its domestic and international environments.<sup>88</sup> This process is reflected in policy orientations which have ranged from the familiar theme of "defending the Middle East"<sup>89</sup> which found expression in both the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines to the "disengagement and engagement on a more selective basis"<sup>90</sup> approach of the Nixon Doctrine through which, with whatever assistance is deemed appropriate by a United States which ". . . cannot --and will not--undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world,"<sup>91</sup> the nations of the Middle East "must provide for their own security."<sup>92</sup> While the key interests and objectives of the United States in the Middle East can be simply stated, the complex policies through which these are pursued are difficult to summarize in general terms.

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<sup>88</sup>Bernard Reich, "America in the Middle East: Changing Aspects in U. S. Policy," The New Middle East, No. 1, (October 1968), p. 9.

<sup>89</sup>Quandt, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>90</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>91</sup>Melvin R. Laird, National Security Strategy of Realistic Deterrence, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 21.

<sup>92</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 26.



Because the greatest danger for the United States in the Middle East is the possibility of a direct confrontation and possibly war with the Soviet Union resulting from local conflicts within the region,<sup>93</sup> the vital interest and primary objective of American foreign policy has been and continues to be the prevention and control of such conflicts and, thus, the avoidance of war between the superpowers.<sup>94</sup> The other predominant interests of the United States in the Middle East have been: to prevent the Soviet Union from dominating the area because a Soviet hegemony would represent a perilous shift in world power relationships against the United States and the West;<sup>95</sup> to ensure continued American and Western access to Middle Eastern communications facilities, resources--especially Persian Gulf oil--and strategic positions; to make possible orderly political and economic development that will permit profitable American investment in the region; and to secure and promote the continued existence and well-being of the State of Israel.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>William B. Quandt, "The Middle East Conflict in U. S. Strategy, 1970-71," Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. I, No. 1 (Autumn 1971), p. 39.

<sup>94</sup>Temple Wanamaker, American Foreign Policy Today, New York, Bantam Books, 1964, p. 199; Reich, loc. cit.

<sup>95</sup>U. S. Congress, House, Soviet Involvement in the Middle East and the Western Response, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 137.

<sup>96</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 33; Reich, loc. cit., Wanamaker, loc. cit.



In pursuit of these interests--which have often proved to be incompatible<sup>97</sup>--the United States evolved the policy of containment intended to thwart Soviet penetration of the region and developed the guiding concept of "peace and stability with change" within the Middle East.<sup>98</sup> By the end of the 1960s, with the Northern Tier both softening toward Moscow and being leapfrogged by Soviet advances into the Arab states, containment appeared nearly defunct in the Middle East although the United States continues in its efforts to prevent Soviet inroads in the region.<sup>99</sup> Once the Six Day War underlined the inherent instability of the Middle East as manifested in the Arab-Israeli and inter-Arab conflicts extant in the region, the "peace and stability" concept experienced a shift in focus from an emphasis on stability to an emphasis on peace as the appropriate goal of American policy.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Quandt, United States Policy in the Middle East: Constraints and Choices, p. v. As an example of this incompatibility, Quandt (p. 2) offers the United States' desire 'to bring the Arab states into collective security arrangements to prevent Soviet expansion, as had been successfully done in the 'Northern Tier' countries of Turkey and Iran," a policy which "would have required active cooperation from the Arab states" which was precluded by American involvement in the creation of a Jewish state in Israel to which the "Arab states . . . were violently opposed" and which they "came to see as a creation of the United States."

<sup>98</sup>Reich, loc. cit.

<sup>99</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>100</sup>Reich, op. cit., pp. 9-11.





Within this context, three general courses of action emerged as policy alternatives. At one end of the spectrum was increased United States involvement. However, any attempt by Washington to become the area's "policeman" would have been precluded by the "numerous intra-regional disputes, lack of clear benefit for the United States of such an act, and the unwillingness of most of the states in the region to accept such a posture"<sup>101</sup> if not by the pronounced reluctance of the United States born of the Vietnam experience to be drawn into any entanglements which might entail military involvement in another "peripheral" area.<sup>102</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, a policy of disengagement and withdrawal to isolationism might accomplish the objective of preventing a war between the superpowers which could grow out of local conflicts in the region, but would endanger other American interests in the Middle East and elsewhere.<sup>103</sup> Consequently, American foreign policy today, which is based on recognition of the fact that "some involvement [in the Middle East] is inevitable and the need is to determine form and content," eschews the simplistic approach of the two extremes and pursues a course which, for want of a better term, may be

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>102</sup>Dadant, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>103</sup>Quandt in Journal of Palestine Studies, op. cit., p. 40.





called "selective involvement."<sup>104</sup> The new Nixon administration's February, 1969, decision to become actively involved in the pursuit of a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict--manifested by such initiatives as the Rogers Plan attempt to end Egypt's "war of attrition" against Israel<sup>105</sup> and probably reaching its apogee in Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's post-Yom Kippur War negotiations of 1973 and 1974--is representative of this approach--one which the United States pursues through relatively active or passive means depending upon the priority accorded the problems of the Middle East over those of other parts of the world.<sup>106</sup>

Soviet Foreign Policy in the Middle East. It is especially difficult to establish the nature of Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East. Unlike many of their American counterparts, Soviet leaders are not given to introspective commentary on the motivating factors in the formulation of their foreign policy and policy pronouncements are often so obscured by ideological jargon that all--even specialists--approach them with trepidation.<sup>107</sup> Officials of the U. S.

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<sup>104</sup>Reich, loc. cit.

<sup>105</sup>Quandt, op. cit., pp. 41-45.

<sup>106</sup>Quandt, United States Policy in the Middle East: Constraints and Choices, p. 55.

<sup>107</sup>Gary G. Sick, Russia and the West in the Mediterranean: Perspectives for the 1970s, Newport, U. S. Naval War College, 1970, p. 58.



Department of State admit to having no "firmly formulated view on the point of Soviet long-term aims"<sup>108</sup> in the region. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that the Kremlin leaders themselves are certain of the exact nature of their policy toward the Middle East.<sup>109</sup>

The motives and objectives which have been attributed by Western observers to Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East since its most recent activation in 1955 appear to run a gamut best characterized by William Welch's typology of of American images of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>110</sup> Beginning with what has been termed "militant expansionism" aiming at world domination, these progress through a "limited expansionism" view of Soviet behavior as a considerably more ambiguous militance tempered by a realistic assessment of means to a "reluctant expansionism" image of Soviet belligerence reflecting a pervasive sense of insecurity and fear rather than any ambition on Moscow's part to expand its power and influence.<sup>111</sup> Western views of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy tend to parallel these images.

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<sup>108</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>109</sup>Evron, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>110</sup>William Welch, American Images of Soviet Foreign Policy, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970, pp. 55-58.

<sup>111</sup>Griffiths, op. cit., p. 10.



Taken alone, any one of these explanations is, at best, an oversimplified and inadequate explanation of extremely complex and dynamic behavior patterns. The least valid appears to be the "militant expansionism" interpretation which reflects a strong tendency to overstate the importance attached to the Middle East by Soviet leaders and to exaggerate the purposefulness of Moscow's policies and actions that have led to its extensive involvement in the region<sup>112</sup> on the part of Western observers whose conclusions have been based not on any likely view of priority Soviet interests in the region but on priority Western fears of Moscow's intentions<sup>113</sup> and whose perceptions have been colored by preconceived ideas and value judgements about how the West should react toward and cope with the Soviet "threat" to the region.<sup>114</sup>

A more valid explanation of Soviet foreign policy and forward naval deployment in the Middle East is to be found in some combination of the limited and reluctant expansionism tendencies which reflect the extent to which the evolution of that policy has been derivative, arising out of pursuit of more highly valued extra-regional objectives, and reactive, or improvised in response to opportunities

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<sup>112</sup>Becker and Horelick, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>113</sup>Kenneth Booth, "Military Power, Military Force, and Soviet Foreign Policy," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>114</sup>Evron, loc. cit.





that presented themselves as consequences of events over which Moscow had little control, or as the unintended consequences of actions undertaken for other purposes.<sup>115</sup> Within this context, general Soviet foreign policy orientations which have persisted through time and which are pertinent to the presence of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East may be identified.

In general terms, Soviet foreign policy shares motivations and characteristics common to the foreign policies evolved by every other national actor in international politics in that it aims first to maximize the national security of the USSR and then to maximize its political influence, economic potential, and other benefits to be derived through relations with the rest of the world.<sup>116</sup> An evaluation of the significance of the Middle Eastern landmass to these interests reveals that no vital Soviet interests are presently at stake therein; as has been shown, the vital interest of the USSR in the Middle East, the extra-regional one of national security, is currently affected only from the waters which surround the landmass--the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Sea as well as the Indian Ocean.<sup>117</sup> The first objective of Soviet

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<sup>115</sup>Arnold L. Horelick, Soviet Middle East Policy: Origins and Prospects, Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, February 1971, pp. 1-2.

<sup>116</sup>Booth, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>117</sup>Oles M. Smolansky, "The Political Background to Soviet Naval Policy in the Mediterranean," in McCWire, op. cit., pp. 331-333.



foreign policy in the Middle East, then, is the security of the homeland, and the primary mission of the Soviet Navy in implementing that policy in the waters of the region is to develop and maintain its capability to counter the West's sea-based strategic strike capability.<sup>118</sup> The second objective is to enhance the image and influence of the USSR while eroding that of the West to ensure Moscow's establishment as the dominant superpower in a Middle East it covets as a "sphere of influence" essential to other extra-regional goals such as "the creation of a system of collective security in Asia"<sup>119</sup> oriented toward the containment of China<sup>120</sup> and the pursuit of future interests in Asia and Africa as well as many and varied intra-regional goals ranging from its desire to be the political arbiter within the region<sup>121</sup> to its political and economic interests in Middle Eastern oil.<sup>122</sup> Moscow does not desire to establish the Soviet flag or satellites in the Middle East, but to establish a

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<sup>118</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Mediterranean and Soviet Naval Interests," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>119</sup>Leonid I. Brezhnev, Opening Speech to the International Conference on Communist and Worker's Parties, Moscow, on June 7, 1969, Vital Speeches (July 15, 1969), p. 592.

<sup>120</sup>Robert E. Hunter, The Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East--Part I: Problems of Commitment, London, The Institute for Strategic Studies, September 1969, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>122</sup>Robert E. Hunter, The Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East--Part II: Oil and the Persian Gulf, London, The Institute for Strategic Studies, October 1969, pp. 2-12.



dominant Soviet political, economic, and military presence in the area.<sup>123</sup> The interest of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, then, is that of a superpower in an adjacent area which offers good prospects for extending its influence and enhancing its security.<sup>124</sup> Moscow appears to pursue these interests through policies designed to maintain a state of exploitable controlled tension throughout the region.

Finally, however, Moscow certainly shares Washington's interest in preventing a superpower nuclear confrontation over the Middle East and Soviet foreign policy in the region since the Six Day War has appeared to reflect this interest. In mid-1969, for example, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko observed that ". . . it is in the interests of both countries [i.e., the U. S. and the USSR] to prevent clashes between the world's two biggest powers . . . ,"<sup>125</sup> and Soviet diplomacy in the highly charged atmosphere of the Arab-Israeli conflict generally has been characterized by caution, counsel of moderation to its Arab clients, and a continuing emphasis on the need to find a political rather than a military solution to the dilemma.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>125</sup>Andrei A. Gromyko, Speech to the Supreme Soviet Parliament, Moscow, on July 11, 1969, Vital Speeches (August 1, 1969), p. 626.

<sup>126</sup>Sick, op. cit., p. 69.



Bernard Lewis once observed that: "In the West as in Russia the question that arises is a basic and simple one-- how much trouble is the Middle East worth?"<sup>127</sup> Apparently, quite a lot. In spite of the overriding concern with avoiding a nuclear confrontation, the other interests of the superpowers in the Middle East seem destined to prolong Soviet and American involvement in the region.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Bernard Lewis, "The Consequences of Defeat," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 46, No. 2 (January 1968), p. 325.

<sup>128</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 3.





## CHAPTER III

### THE SOVIET NAVY: AN INSTRUMENT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The necessity of neutralizing the United States' sea-based strategic strike capability originally dictated the establishment of a Soviet naval presence in the waters of the Middle East only a decade ago. Although the strategic defense of the homeland against attack from the sea has been and probably remains its primary mission, the Soviet Navy has evolved, in the past several years, into both an important determinant and an increasingly significant instrument of the USSR's foreign policy throughout the region.

#### THE FORWARD DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOVIET NAVY AND FOREIGN POLICY

The physical requirements for the maintenance of the defensive forward deployment of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East have been a primary consideration in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy toward the region--policy which, in turn, the Soviet Navy eventually helped to implement. Because the vital interest of national security takes priority over all other Soviet interests in the region, the Soviet Navy's requirement for shore support facilities and for the reopening of the Suez Canal appear



to have justified moves such as deep involvement in Egypt and in the Arab-Israeli conflict with attendant risks which otherwise might be construed as running counter to Moscow's long-term interests in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

Shore Support Facilities. The most immediate advantage to be derived from naval shore support facilities adjacent to an area of forward deployment is the increased time which any ship can spend "on station" as opposed to "in transit" to and from its home port. Such facilities were and continue to be of special importance to the Soviet Navy--primarily a coastal defense navy prior to 1964--which did not possess and is now only developing adequate mobile logistic support capabilities essential to naval forces deployed forward without access to an extensive shore support infrastructure. Moreover, in terms of countering the Western sea-based strategic threat, forward support facilities are of equal if not greater significance to the employment of long-range maritime surveillance aircraft for anti-carrier and anti-submarine warfare and as terminals for fixed underwater submarine detection systems.<sup>2</sup>

The overriding value placed by the Soviets on the acquisition of essential shore support facilities is apparent from the extensive diplomatic efforts exerted toward

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<sup>1</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Maritime Strategy--Purposive or Preventive?" in McGwire, op. cit., p. 454.

<sup>2</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy--Prospects for the Seventies," in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 411-413.



this end. Moscow commenced overtures to Cairo aimed at obtaining facilities in Egypt as early as December, 1961--six months after the loss of the submarine base at Vallona and only shortly after the decision to move forward in strategic defense had been taken--when Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, made the first of four visits to that capital.<sup>3</sup> Khrushchev's 1964 tour of Egypt was, no doubt, prompted in part by his determination to obtain facilities for the use of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.<sup>4</sup> Although Soviet warships made their first naval visit to Egypt in ten years late in 1965,<sup>5</sup> Moscow did not acquire the facilities its navy needed until after the Six Day War in 1967.<sup>6</sup> The extensive involvement generated by acquisition of these facilities, the defense systems to support them (the defense of Egypt from Israel at the same time was largely incidental), and the consequent Soviet incursion on Egyptian sovereignty appear to have been among the reasons for President Anwar Sadat's expulsion of the bulk of Moscow's military personnel in July, 1972, which constituted a major setback to the USSR's Middle Eastern policy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Mediterranean and Soviet Naval Interests," in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

<sup>4</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>5</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>Oles M. Smolansky, "The Soviet Setback in the Middle East," Current History, Vol. 64, No. 337 (January 1973), pp. 17-18.





In an attempt to provide for the support of forward deployment in the Indian Ocean, Gorshkov paid a ten-day visit to India in February, 1968, followed by Soviet Navy "good will" port calls,<sup>8</sup> which marked the beginning of intensive Soviet naval assistance to that country.<sup>9</sup> Continued efforts, including extensive assistance to the developing Indian Navy<sup>10</sup> and naval demonstrations in support of India during the Indo-Pakistani war of December, 1971,<sup>11</sup> have obtained limited access for the Soviet Navy to Indian naval facilities.<sup>12</sup> India has, however, repeatedly refused to grant base rights to the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup>

Although the Soviet Navy has been striving to develop measures which will reduce its dependence on other nations,<sup>14</sup> it is apparent from its continued efforts to secure bases throughout the region--most recently evidenced by Moscow's

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<sup>8</sup>Dadant, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup>Norman Polmar, Soviet Naval Power: Challenge for the 1970s, New York, National Strategy Information Center, Inc., 1972, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup>U. S. Congress, House, The Indian Ocean: Political and Strategic Future, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup>James M. McConnell and Anne M. Kelly, Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the Indo-Pakistani Crisis, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, February 1973, pp. 2-6.

<sup>12</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>13</sup>"Soviet Setback," Washington Star-News (March 4, 1974), no page number; "U. S.-British Plan Defended for Base on Diego Garcia," The Christian Science Monitor (March 5, 1974), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>MccGwire, op. cit., p. 322.



mid-1974 strengthening of its naval position in two countries which border the Indian Ocean entrance to the Red Sea, South Yemen and Somalia<sup>15</sup>--that the requirement for shore support facilities to support its forward deployment will have a continuing effect on Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East for at least the next several years.

The Suez Canal. The Soviet Navy's interest in the reopening of the Suez Canal also appears to have had a determinative influence on Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East. Although Moscow currently maintains a naval force of over 20 ships in the Indian Ocean,<sup>16</sup> it does so at great cost as a result of the closure of the canal since June, 1967, which has severely restricted the forward deployment, which began the following year. In order to reach the western portions of the Indian Ocean--the Arabian Sea and its missile threat as well as the oil-rich Persian Gulf--Soviet warships must either travel over 11,000 miles from the Black Sea through the Mediterranean and around the Cape of Good Hope or steam up to 9,000 miles from Vladivostok<sup>17</sup> or other Pacific Ocean bases which are often severely

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<sup>15</sup>Paul Wohl, "Moscow Courts Somalia and South Yemen," The Christian Science Monitor (August 15, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Burt, "Verbal Gunfire Over U. S., Soviet Roles in Indian Ocean," The Christian Science Monitor (March 6, 1974), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup>Cottrell in The New Middle East (July 1971), op. cit., p. 31.



handicapped by fog in the spring and autumn and by ice in the winter.<sup>18</sup> However, as is evident from a glance at a map (see Fig. 2, p. 30), were its ships able to transit the Suez Canal--the voyage from the Black Sea through the eastern Mediterranean into the Indian Ocean via the canal is only 2,200 miles--the Soviet Navy could greatly enhance its presence in the region.<sup>19</sup> The prospect of gaining this objective was probably a primary reason why Moscow did not actively oppose Washington's efforts at the beginning of the 1970s to effect an interim settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict which would involve the separation of Egyptian and Israeli forces at the Suez Canal front and permit the opening of the canal itself<sup>20</sup> as well as its apparent underwriting of the October, 1973, Yom Kippur War, in which Egypt regained control of the canal from Israel.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOVIET NAVY

#### AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Beginning in the middle 1960s, the new permanent presence of the Soviet Navy in the eastern Mediterranean conceivably could have been employed by the Kremlin, in concert

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<sup>18</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>Burt, loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 155; Cottrell, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>21</sup>Robert D. Heintz, Jr., "A Sensible Suez Proposal," Navy Times (April 10, 1974), p. 13.





with other policy tools, to enhance its own capability for strategic defense of the USSR through active application to efforts aimed at acquisition of the desired shore support facilities as well as in attempts to further other Soviet foreign policy goals in the Middle East. In theory, this Soviet naval presence should have promoted Soviet interests in the Middle East while simultaneously eroding the interests of the West. As the result of such a presence, according to MccGwire:<sup>22</sup>

Local states would be able to contemplate alignments and alternative sources of support which were previously not available. States hitherto associated with the West might be tempted to the opposite alignment; states hostile to Western powers might prove even less amenable to blandishments or pressure. States willing to be uncommitted might now feel compelled to deny facilities and friendly gestures once offered to Western fleets, so as to avoid offering similar concessions to the Soviets. Meanwhile the presence of Soviet naval units . . . would introduce a complicating factor which would . . . inhibit if not actually limit the . . . freedom of action at sea which the West . . . has seemed to enjoy.

Although the Soviet Navy had made a habit of occasional official visits in areas of strategic concern since 1953,<sup>23</sup> there is no evidence to indicate that the political and naval leadership in Moscow perceived the possible political benefits of the forward deployment in the eastern Mediterranean when it was first undertaken.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Michael MccGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy--Prospects for the Seventies," in MccGwire, op. cit., pp. 422-423.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>24</sup>David R. Cox, "Sea Power and Soviet Foreign Policy," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 95, No. 6 (June 1969), p. 43.





Latent Naval Suasion Before the Six Day War. Indeed, the pattern of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron's operational activity during the first four years of forward deployment --with the possible exception of the 1964 appearances of Soviet warships in the Aegean Sea and off the coast of Cyprus at the moments of greatest tension in the relations between Greece and Turkey over the island<sup>25</sup>--could not support the thesis that it was directed to earn political dividends among the nations of the Middle East.

In pursuit of its mission of strategic defense from 1964 through the first half of 1967, the Soviet Navy maintained a low political profile in the eastern Mediterranean. At least partly out of fear of being charged with naval imperialism<sup>26</sup> and partly because of an ideological barrier against foreign bases<sup>27</sup> which probably was reinforced by the experience in Albania, the squadron operated from anchorages located well over the horizon, out of sight of land, in spite of the advantages that would accrue from lying closer to shore<sup>28</sup> or from utilizing facilities ashore. Occasional regular visits of Soviet Mediterranean Squadron elements to Egyptian ports began only in 1966<sup>29</sup> when the

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<sup>25</sup>Herrick, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>26</sup>MccGwire, op. cit., p. 424.

<sup>27</sup>Malcolm Mackintosh, "Soviet Military Policy," in MccGwire, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>28</sup>MccGwire, loc. cit.

<sup>29</sup>Becker and Horelick, op. cit., p. 59.



average number of Soviet ships deployed forward was only about ten or twelve.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, the mere presence of the new Soviet Mediterranean Squadron--as politically undirected as it seems to have been--apparently had begun to reshape the military dimension of the local international environment perceived by eastern Mediterranean policy makers enough to enhance Moscow's position and contribute to the erosion of Washington's influence there. The case of Turkey offers an interesting illustration of these effects of latent naval suasion. A staunch and dependable ally of the United States in the early post-World War II period, Ankara, in the mid-1960s, began to move more and more toward non-alignment and, thus, away from amenability to Western influence. It is, of course, obvious that Moscow's activist policy in the Middle East was not the sole reason for this change in Turkey's attitude. Probably the most important single factor was Ankara's growing disenchantment with Washington's attitude toward and actions in the dispute with Greece over Cyprus. The examples of Iran and Pakistan, Turkey's allies in the Central Treaty Organization, both normalizing relations with the Soviet Union and deriving important economic and political benefits from the arrangement must have been another important factor in motivating the establishment of

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<sup>30</sup> Neville Brown, "Soviet Naval Expansion--The Global Scene Assessed," The New Middle East, No. 30 (March 1971), p. 18.



closer ties with Moscow. But, on an imponderable yet no less significant level, Turkey's uneasiness was augmented by the establishment of a permanent Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean which rendered Ankara vulnerable to Soviet pressure from both the north and the south.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the deployment of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron in the waters surrounding Turkey was a reality which no Turkish government, regardless of its political persuasion, could possibly ignore.

However, the event which would demonstrate to Moscow the value of the Soviet Navy as an active instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East was yet to occur.

The Six Day War as a Turning Point. A turning point for the Soviet Navy in the Middle East came in June, 1967, when the Arab-Israeli conflict erupted in the Six Day War which both opened the door for a substantial augmentation of the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean<sup>32</sup> and prompted a shift toward the active political exploitation of ships on forward deployment.<sup>33</sup>

In early May, 1967, Moscow had inexplicably "warned" Syria and Egypt that Israeli troops were massing on the Syrian border, prepared to attack. Although patently

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<sup>31</sup>Smolansky, in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 336-337.

<sup>32</sup>Wolfe, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>33</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Turning Point in Naval Policy Formulation," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 176.





untrue, these reports commenced a series of political escalations and military movements within the Arab states which forced Israel to launch what she considered a preventive war on June 5. Initially, the war appeared to ruin Moscow's position in the Arab world.<sup>34</sup> When Israel struck, the Kremlín's immediate resort to the "hot line" dramatically demonstrated its overriding interest in avoiding a military confrontation with the United States. To the USSR's clients, this meant that there could be no direct Soviet intervention to rescue them from a defeat at the hands of the Israelis.<sup>35</sup> To the USSR, it meant the possible loss of all its recent gains in the Middle East.<sup>36</sup>

Faced with one of the great debacles of its foreign policy, the Soviet Union after the Six Day War might conceivably have chosen to disengage itself from the radical Arab cause. Although this alternative undoubtedly was considered in Moscow, the decision to maintain its position in the Middle East was quickly taken and the USSR undertook massive arms deliveries to the defeated Arab states and extended full diplomatic and political support.<sup>37</sup> As a part of this effort, elements of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron intervened in such a way as to reap a modest

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<sup>34</sup>Dadant, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>35</sup>Horelick, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>36</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>Horelick, loc. cit.



diplomatic reward for the Soviet Union<sup>38</sup> and to firmly establish the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East.

Although it was "a little risky" to deploy eight ships (including a cruiser and two destroyers) to Port Said so soon after the fighting--the Israeli forces across the Suez Canal were still flushed with victory and only a month had passed since the "accidental" Israeli attack on the American electronic intelligence ship USS Liberty--Admiral Molochov's bold July 10 declaration that the Soviet Navy stood "ready to cooperate with Egyptian armed forces to repel any aggression" had the desired effect. Whether or not the Israelis had planned more attacks, none occurred, and some of the credibility lost by the Soviet Union during the Six Day War was regained by the Soviet Navy<sup>39</sup> through the exercise of naval suasion which apparently deterred Israel as it supported Egypt. According to a U. S. Defense Intelligence Agency statement, the Soviet Navy's "show of force in and near Alexandria and Port Said enhanced the Soviet image as the protector of the Arabs and discouraged further Israeli military actions . . . ."<sup>40</sup> "Indeed," according to Cable, "this seemingly trivial intervention on the part of the Soviet Navy probably had more immediate impact than

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<sup>38</sup>Cable, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>John W. Patterson, The Soviet Navy in the Cold War, Newport, U. S. Naval War College, 1971, p. 32.



the more important deliveries of arms, because the Soviet Union was seen by the Arabs as at last having displayed some resolution."<sup>41</sup> When tension flared up a few months later following the October, 1967, sinking about 13 miles off Port Said of the Israeli Navy's destroyer Elath by three Soviet-supplied "Styx" surface-to-surface missiles fired from Soviet-built "Komar"-class guided missile patrol boats of the Egyptian Navy,<sup>42</sup> elements of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron which had just left the Egyptian harbor returned to Port Said amid the cheers of crowds of Egyptians.<sup>43</sup> Again, the presence of the Soviet Navy in Port Said, backed as it was by the prestige and menace of the Soviet military establishment in the area,<sup>44</sup> appears to have evoked precisely the suasion effect intended: the Israelis did not attack Port Said in reprisal. Soviet propagandists claimed, and the Egyptians seemed to believe, that this Soviet naval action prevented a renewed Israeli attack on Egypt.<sup>45</sup>

These naval successes following the Six Day War contributed to the Soviet Navy's acquisition of the desired

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<sup>41</sup>Cable, loc. cit.

<sup>42</sup>Robert D. Colvin, "Aftermath of the Elath," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 95, No. 10 (October 1969), pp. 61-62.

<sup>43</sup>"Egyptians Cheer Soviet Ships," The New York Times (October 28, 1967), p. 13.

<sup>44</sup>J. R. Hill in Moulton, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>45</sup>Cable, loc. cit.





shore support facilities in Egypt<sup>46</sup> which made that country the pivotal Soviet outpost in the eastern Mediterranean,<sup>47</sup> to its continued welcome in other Arab ports closed to the warships of the USSR's Western rivals, and to the favorable attention devoted to Soviet naval activities by the Arab press.<sup>48</sup>

Within Egypt, large sections of the harbor at Alexandria were restricted to the exclusive use of the Soviet Navy<sup>49</sup> which imported a complex of support ships to serve as a floating support facility adjacent to the shore where their ships and submarines--including nuclear submarines--could come and go at will.<sup>50</sup> Development of deep-water port facilities at Mersa Matruh on Egypt's western coast was geared largely to the Soviet Navy's needs<sup>51</sup> and a Soviet naval air station, the first of several, was established there. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron also gained facilities at Port Said and at Latakia, Syria. None of these facilities were formal bases; Moscow avoided concluding formal base agreements which it feared might have

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>48</sup>Cable, loc. cit.

<sup>49</sup>George Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East, Washington, D. C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1972, p. 157.

<sup>50</sup>Eric Pace, "Visit by a Russian Submarine to Egyptian Port is Reported," The New York Times (March 17, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>Polmar, op. cit., p. 47.





imperialistic connotations which might expose the USSR to dangerous comparisons with Western powers which only recently had used bases in Arab countries.<sup>52</sup>

Access to these facilities brought a sharp rise in the scale, quality, and effectiveness of Soviet naval operations in the eastern Mediterranean. Ship-days deployed increased by roughly three times<sup>53</sup> as the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron expanded to an average presence of 35<sup>54</sup> or 40<sup>55</sup> combatants and auxiliaries and reached peaks of about 60 vessels during exercises in November, 1968, and April, 1969, and 63 to 65 ships in August, 1969.<sup>56</sup> As the Soviet Navy continued to pursue its primary mission of strategic defense, there was an increasing use of naval units for specifically political purposes.<sup>57</sup> This dramatic departure from past Soviet naval practice not only gave Moscow's naval power much greater visibility in waters which had previously been virtually the exclusive preserve of the U. S. Sixth Fleet and allied NATO navies, but had the further effect of lending

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<sup>52</sup>Lenczowski, loc. cit.

<sup>53</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Mediterranean and Soviet Naval Interests," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>54</sup>Dadant, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>55</sup>Wolfe, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>56</sup>"Soviet Fleet Grows in the Mediterranean," The New York Times (August 20, 1969), p. 12.

<sup>57</sup>Michael McGwire, The Gorshkov Series--"Navies in War and Peace": A Preliminary Analysis, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, May 1973, p. 15.



credence to declarations that the Soviet Navy was thenceforth prepared to operate "wherever required to protect the state interests of the USSR"--a notion relatively new to the Kremlin's political repertoire.<sup>58</sup> Although it is not exactly clear precisely what is meant by the "state interests" of the USSR, contextual analysis indicates that the term does not, properly speaking, cover strategic defense. Thus, as Admiral Gorshkov has explained, Soviet naval forces in the waters of the Middle East have the wartime mission of defending the sea frontiers of the socialist bloc, while "in peacetime our Navy reliably protects the state interests of the Soviet Union on sea and ocean." His deputy, Fleet Admiral Vladimir Kasatonov, has declared the Soviet Navy to be "capable of executing strategic missions and reliably protecting the state interests of the Soviet Union on the seas and oceans."<sup>59</sup> Admiral Sir John Hamilton, former Commander-in-Chief of NATO's Allied Forces Mediterranean, recognized the political impact of the Soviet squadron when he observed "that the presence of this fleet is having a profound effect on men's minds. In this respect, it is contributing significantly to the rise of Soviet influence in the Mediterranean area."<sup>60</sup>

The deployment which proved Moscow's new grasp of the advantages of using the Soviet Navy to advance its foreign

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<sup>58</sup>Wolfe, loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup>McConnell, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>60</sup>Dadant, loc. cit.



policy was the Indian Ocean cruise of March to July, 1968, made by a "Sverdlov"-class cruiser, a "Krupnyy"-class guided missile frigate, and an oiler from the Pacific Fleet. The stated purpose of the cruise was to establish friendly contacts in the area.<sup>61</sup> After calling at Machas and Bombay in India and making their first visit ever to Pakistan by putting in at Karachi, they entered the waters of the Middle East to call at Basra and Umm Qasr in Iraq, Bandar Abbas in Iran, and Aden in the new People's Republic of South Yemen as well as in nearby Mogadiscio, Somalia.<sup>62</sup>

By the end of the 1960s, the Soviet Navy was firmly established as an instrument of Moscow's foreign policy in the Middle East and was emerging as a potential agent for Soviet policy in areas accessible through the strategic waterways of the region.<sup>63</sup>

Active Naval Suasion Since the Six Day War. The favorable consequences of the Soviet naval actions in Egypt following the Six Day War so enhanced the Kremlin's perception of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy<sup>64</sup> that, during the ensuing several years, it has been employed in the

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<sup>61</sup>Defense Intelligence Agency, Exercise Sever, Washington, D. C., April 1969, p. 9, cited in Patterson, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>62</sup>Center for Strategic and International Studies, Soviet Sea Power, Washington, D. C., Georgetown University, 1969, p. 64.

<sup>63</sup>Horelick, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>64</sup>Cox, loc. cit.





Middle East and in nearby Third World areas in ways which continue to exceed the bounds of "good will" port calls and simple "showing the flag" operations<sup>65</sup> in both their military and their political significance. Sufficient data are available to permit brief treatment of seven instances --four in the Middle East and three in Sub-Saharan Africa-- in which Moscow has exercised some form of naval suasion intended to further its foreign policy in these areas of the world.

South Yemen in 1967. In November, 1967,<sup>66</sup> only five months following its successes in Egypt, the Soviet Navy acted ostentatiously to "support" the demand made by the revolutionary leaders of the new People's Republic of South Yemen for the withdrawal of British forces from Aden with which London quickly complied. Within days, Soviet warships had entered Aden's deepwater harbor and tied up at the docks "in order to safeguard the South Yemeni Government." Subsequently becoming the unofficial property of the Soviet Navy, Aden was soon frequented by Soviet warships making port calls throughout the Persian Gulf and western Indian Ocean area.<sup>67</sup> By the middle of 1974, there were always two or three Soviet naval units in the port of Aden, once the world's fourth largest refueling station,

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<sup>65</sup>McConnell, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>66</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 420.

<sup>67</sup>Griswold in U. S. Congress, House, U. S. Interests in and Policy Toward the Persian Gulf, pp. 200-201.



which the Soviets have improved to service their increased Indian Ocean presence once the Suez Canal is reopened.<sup>68</sup>

Ghana in 1969. Moscow's next demonstration of its readiness to apply limited naval force in pursuit of its interests occurred outside the Middle East in 1969 when Ghana, which had impounded two Soviet fishing vessels the previous October for allegedly entering its waters, refused to release the trawlers in the face of strongly-worded Soviet protests and the imposition of significant economic sanctions. The release of those vessels in March, 1969, coincided with the unprecedented deployment and obvious presence of three Soviet Navy combatants off the Ghanaian coast in the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>69</sup> In this incident, the Soviet Navy demonstrated its capability to protect the interests of the USSR through the application of pressure: the implicit threat perceived as a result of this exercise of coercive naval suasion appears to have compelled Accra to respond as Moscow intended with the return of the trawlers.

Libya in 1969. When, in early September, 1969, a coup d'etat led by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi deposed King Idris of Libya, ships of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, including the new helicopter carrier Moskva, which had been conducting

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<sup>68</sup>Wohl, loc. cit.

<sup>69</sup>Weinland, op. cit., p. 11.



maneuvers off the coast of Syria and Egypt,<sup>70</sup> were interposed between Western naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea and the Libyan capital at Tripoli. Although it is most unlikely that the British contemplated a naval intervention or that the United States considered a repetition of the Sixth Fleet's 1958 Lebanon landing to oppose this coup, Tripoli radio announced that the presence of Soviet warships had deterred Western intervention<sup>71</sup> and the new Libyan government publicly expressed its thanks to the Soviet Navy.<sup>72</sup> In point of fact, both the United States and Britain controlled air bases in Libya at the time and would not necessarily have had to intervene by sea.<sup>73</sup> What mattered, however, were not the facts but what was believed.<sup>74</sup> Although it is highly improbable that any deterrence did, in fact, occur, Libyan perceptions of the Soviet Navy's interposition on its behalf might have produced benefits there similar to those which Moscow had realized two years earlier in Egypt. The United States' subsequently evacuated Wheelus Air Force Base near Tripoli was of great potential importance to Soviet naval aviation

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<sup>70</sup>"Soviet Maneuvers in the Mediterranean," The New York Times (August 26, 1969), p. 12.

<sup>71</sup>Cable, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>72</sup>Vice Admiral Richard G. Colbert, "Challenge!" Naval War College Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (December 1970), p. 2.

<sup>73</sup>Blechman, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>74</sup>Cable, loc. cit.





for reconnaissance of the Sixth Fleet. However, a combination of Libyan nationalism, anti-communism, and fresh memories of massive foreign presence--American and British--on Libyan territory prevented Libya's military rulers from offering this base to the Soviet Union.<sup>75</sup>

Somalia in 1970. Soviet gunboat diplomacy became a fact of life in the Indian Ocean in 1970. As the result of the military coup of October, 1969, in Somalia, a government was installed which became friendly with the USSR and increasingly cool toward the United States. When, on April 27, 1970, Mogadiscio announced discovery of a plot against this regime, two Soviet warships in that port for a five-day official good will visit remained there--apparently in a protective intervention status--until the second week in May when the stability of the "progressive" Siad regime seemed assured. Unconfirmed reports indicate that Soviet Navy ships had been pre-deployed to provide moral support for the coup which had brought Siad's regime to power the previous year.<sup>76</sup> Through its presence in Somalia, the Soviet Navy exercised naval suasion in support of what might be considered a client regime, which it may have helped to establish, against a domestic threat and, in doing so, certainly helped to ensure the access to Somalian ports such as

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<sup>75</sup>Lenczowski, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

<sup>76</sup>McConnell, op. cit., p. 11.





Berbera and Mogadiscio which it continues to enjoy. On July 11, 1974, Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny, accompanied by First Deputy Defense Minister General Sergei Sokolov, signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Mogadiscio regime to secure the Soviet Navy's position at Berbera which, combined with Moscow's established naval presence at Aden 200 miles across the Gulf of Aden to the north, has strengthened Moscow's position astride the Indian Ocean entrance to the Red Sea in anticipation of the reopening of the Suez Canal.<sup>77</sup>

Guinea in 1970. In November, 1970, in the aftermath of a Portuguese-supported attack on Conakry, Moscow established a regular patrol of naval combatants off the coast of Guinea to deter or prevent further raids.<sup>78</sup> The persistence of this force suggests that a West African patrol has been added to the other permanent deployments of the Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean<sup>79</sup> as a continuous exercise in naval suasion designed both to deter raids and, at the same time, to enhance Moscow's political influence with a non-client. At this writing, the Soviet Navy maintains a maritime reconnaissance squadron which includes long-range "Bear" turboprop aircraft monitoring ship movements in the South Atlantic--possibly

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<sup>77</sup>Wohl, loc. cit.

<sup>78</sup>Weinland, loc. cit.

<sup>79</sup>McConnell, loc. cit.



because Moscow attaches long-term strategic importance to that area as a critical sea route in and out of the Indian Ocean for both Persian Gulf supertankers and U. S. Navy ships.<sup>80</sup>

Sierra Leone in 1971. Moscow exercised naval suasion on behalf of another West African non-client when, in 1971, a Soviet Navy "Kashin"-class guided missile destroyer, apparently detached from the West African patrol,<sup>81</sup> demonstrated Soviet solidarity with the embattled regime of President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone<sup>82</sup> who had just declared his country a republic, engineered his own election to office, and publicly accused the United States of complicity in a recent attempt to depose him. Apparently pleased with Steven's turn toward "positive neutrality," the Soviet Navy made its first "business visit" to Freetown in late May, no doubt to lend support to Steven's government and to discourage further plots.<sup>83</sup>

Iraqi-Kuwaiti Border Dispute of 1973. One of Moscow's most recent political applications of the Soviet Navy occurred early in April, 1973, when Admiral Gorshkov and a

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<sup>80</sup>John W. Finney, "Soviets Said to Use Guinea to Observe U. S. Shipping," The New York Times (December 6, 1973), pp. 1, 13; Drew Middleton, "U. S. Global Military Role: Are Forces Big Enough?" The New York Times (March 17, 1974), p. 30.

<sup>81</sup>Weinland, loc. cit.

<sup>82</sup>McConnell, loc. cit.

<sup>83</sup>Weinland, op. cit., pp. 11-12.



contingent of Soviet naval ships visited Iraq at the time of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border dispute.<sup>84</sup> With the assistance of the USSR, Iraq is developing a port and naval base at Umm Qasr as an alternative to Basra, currently Iraq's major naval base, from which, for several years, movement of Iraqi ships to the Persian Gulf--accessible only via the disputed Shatt-al-Arab River--has been constrained by the Iranian Navy. Desiring to expand the defense perimeter around Umm Qasr, virtually adjacent to the approximate boundary between Kuwait and Iraq (ten years of efforts to formally demarcate this border, an issue which had been left unsettled when the Iraqis recognized the independence of Kuwait in 1963, had proved unsuccessful), Iraqi military forces attacked the nearby Kuwaiti border post of Al-Samitah on the morning of March 20, 1973, to climax increasing tensions following a breakdown in negotiations. While the moderate Middle Eastern regimes--particularly Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran--supported Kuwait and mediated, at Kuwait's request, to prevent an escalation of the conflict, the two Western powers with long-established interests in the area--the United States which has no leverage in Baghdad and Britain which did not feel that the security of Kuwait was seriously threatened--adopted a

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<sup>84</sup> Anne M. Kelly, The Soviet Naval Presence During the Iraq-Kuwaiti Border Dispute: March-April 1973, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, June 1974, p. 5.





"hands off" policy. The Soviets, however, gave immediate support to their client by broadcasting, on March 21, the official Iraqi version of the border incident which blamed Kuwait for the attack. Then, on March 30, Tass announced that Admiral Gorshkov would pay a "friendship" visit to Iraq "during the first half of April at the invitation of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense." No specific reason for this visit was given; nor did Moscow announce that the Soviet Navy would accompany him as it did. Gorshkov and a contingent of Soviet naval ships visited Iraq from April 3 through April 11, 1973.<sup>85</sup>

Several hypotheses have been advanced concerning the exact nature and objective of this instance of naval suasion in Iraq. One of these, that it was only a routine good will visit not intentionally related to the crisis--and, therefore, an example of latent naval suasion--is based on the assumption that Gorshkov's visit was scheduled prior to its outbreak--as it could have been--and that the Soviets either could not cancel the visit, which was coincident with the first anniversary of the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, without alienating their Iraqi client or had not monitored the situation closely and, oblivious to the political implications of their actions, went ahead with the visit as scheduled. This view, however, is discredited by these facts:

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-5.



(1) there are precedents for cancellations of Soviet naval visits under such circumstances and Moscow had sufficient time and some incentive to do so; (2) there is no precedent for a naval representation at such treaty celebrations and Gorshkov did not represent the USSR at the celebration; (3) Moscow was concernedly watching events closely and not oblivious to the implications of the USSR's own behavior; (4) the ships' visit was not announced as usual prior to good will visits; and (5) precedents do exist for the use of "routine" naval visits to clients in time of crisis.<sup>86</sup>

Two other explanations view the presence of the Soviet Navy as one of active naval suasion in the coercive mode intended either to deter third party intervention in the dispute or as a compellent show of force designed to evoke Kuwaiti acceptance of Iraq's demands for the areas surrounding Umm Qasr. As far as the deterrence hypothesis is concerned, while third party intervention by Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Western naval forces operating in the area was a possibility, it was never a strong probability, and the Soviets were in a position to make this assessment. Moreover, there is no precedent for a Soviet Navy deployment against the hypothetical possibility of third party involvement, Iran and the Western powers made no military or naval moves immediately following the border attack that could have reflected the intention to become involved, and the

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-12.



Soviet naval visit occurred after the height of the crisis when the possibility for any third party intervention appeared even less likely. Although the visit coincided with the resumption of negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait, the "compellent show of force" explanation appears less than adequate because there is no evidence that the Soviets attempted to put any diplomatic pressure on Kuwait.<sup>87</sup>

A more reasonable explanation of this instance of active naval suasion--in which Soviet behavior does not indicate that compellence or deterrence was intended while, at the same time, there is sufficient evidence that more than a routine good will port call was intended--is that it was one of "support for Iraq in this crisis" in which "the generally negative world reaction to Iraq's aggression provided the USSR with an opportunity to demonstrate to Iraq the benefits of strong ties with Moscow."<sup>88</sup> During a visit of the Iraqi vice president to Moscow following the border incident, Premier Kosygin pledged continuing support for Iraq in "consolidating its national independence" and, in so doing, lent credence to the interpretation of the naval visit as tangible support for border adjustments which would help ensure Iraq's security as well as maritime and petroleum operations against her less "progressive" and non-Soviet oriented neighbors (i.e., Iran,

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8, 12-16.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 16, 19.





Saudi Arabia, Kuwait) in the Middle East.<sup>89</sup>

The significance of these political actions of the Soviet Navy--three of which occurred outside the waters of the Middle East--but which have been included in this study as part of a general trend as well as for their illustrative value--resides in the fact that they were not just isolated instances of the use of naval forces for political purposes. Rather, they continued and reinforced a trend initiated in 1967 when the exercise of naval suasion contributed to the acquisition of long-sought shore facilities in Egypt for the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron which other forms of diplomacy had been unable to deliver. Furthermore, each of these actions demonstrated the increased awareness of and higher value placed by Moscow on the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy which, as similar opportunities presented themselves in and around the politically unstable Middle East, possessed a unique potential to contribute to the eventual emergence of a Middle Eastern community more amenable to the USSR's extra-regional and intra-regional interests than might be expected to result from the normal course of events.

Active Naval Suasion and the U. S. Navy. In addition to such effects of active naval suasion evoked by the Soviet Navy as those described above, the ascendance of the Soviet

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.





naval presence in the Middle East has contributed in some measure to the American perception of reduced freedom of naval action in the region. Although the primary constraint on the use of the Sixth Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean is probably the dearth of Arab states that would welcome it,<sup>90</sup> the presence of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, which has been designed largely as a counter to the United States naval presence,<sup>91</sup> has eliminated the certainty that American naval operations in the area will not be opposed during crises in the Middle East.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, the use of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron to constrain the West during such crises by neutralizing American interventionary capabilities--i.e., the Sixth Fleet--as potentially directed against their Arab clients<sup>93</sup> has been cited frequently by the Soviets as justification for their presence in the Mediterranean.<sup>94</sup> For example, at a time of considerable tension in the Middle East during July, 1970, Admiral Gorshkov observed that:<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Horelick, op. cit., p. 14; Becker and Horelick, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>91</sup>Barry M. Blechman, "Soviet Interests in Naval Arms Control: Prospects for Disengagement in the Mediterranean," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 446.

<sup>92</sup>Horelick, loc. cit.

<sup>93</sup>Weinland, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>94</sup>Blechman, The Changing Soviet Navy, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report (July 27, 1970), p. E-1.



Ships of the Soviet Navy are systematically present in the ocean, including the areas of the presence of the shock navies of NATO. The presence of our ships in these areas binds the hands of the imperialists, deprives them of a possibility to interfere unhindered into internal affairs of the people.

The impact which the forward deployment of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron has had on Washington's ability to act within the naval environment of the Middle East is probably best viewed as the difference between what is possible given an ensured monopoly of naval power, on the one hand, and what may be done given the necessity of taking into account the dangers of a confrontation with the Soviets,<sup>96</sup> on the other. Certainly, the deployments of inordinately large contingents of Soviet naval combatants in the general area of hostilities during the Six Day War of 1967, the Jordanian civil war of 1970,<sup>97</sup> and, most recently, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 when approximately ninety Soviet naval ships converged on the eastern Mediterranean,<sup>98</sup> were intended to dissuade the unilateral exercise of American naval power as the Sixth Fleet had exercised that power during the Lebanese crisis in 1958.

This difference, for which the exercise of active naval suasion by the Soviet Navy is partially responsible, is best illustrated by a comparison of Washington's ability

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<sup>96</sup>Sick, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>97</sup>Blechman, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

<sup>98</sup>Drew Middleton, "Potential Reopening of the Suez Canal Raises Questions of Military Strategy," The New York Times (January 25, 1974), p. 6.



to act in the case of the Lebanon landing of 1958, which could proceed without fear of Soviet opposition, with its inability to do so during the 1969 confrontation between the government of Lebanon and the Palestinian guerillas.<sup>99</sup> If, at the time President Eisenhower was making the decision for the Sixth Fleet to land Marines in Lebanon, he had been informed that a Soviet cruiser, two destroyers, and an unknown number of submarines were operating off the Lebanese coast and that the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations had announced that any outside interference in the internal affairs of an Arab state would be considered prejudicial to the stability of the entire region, the decision may not have been different, but it would have been taken on entirely different grounds. While the actual decision to intervene in 1958 was presumably based on the determination that it would promote stability and Western influence in the area, a similar decision today--or at any time following the extensive forward deployment of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East--would have to be based on a determination as to whether or not the stakes in Lebanon were sufficiently important to justify the risk of a direct confrontation with the USSR.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, during the confrontation between the government of Lebanon and the Palestinian guerillas in October and

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<sup>99</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>100</sup>Sick, op. cit., pp. 34-35.





November of 1969, the United States was constrained by the presence of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron to limit the role of the Sixth Fleet to that of a concerned observer. While officially expressing "great concern" that the independence and integrity of the country be maintained,<sup>101</sup> Washington disclaimed any intentions of intervention or other interference in the events as they progressed.<sup>102</sup> Moscow, on the other hand, exploited the crisis, taking a strong public stand against possible outside interference in Lebanon and attacking the mild American statement of concern as "reminiscent of the old colonial practice" of intervention.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviet ambassador to Beirut was involved in negotiations designed to enhance the desired image of the Soviet Union as the protector of the Arabs against the West. After a long meeting with Ambassador Azimov, Lebanese Premier Rashid Karami stated that "the Soviet Ambassador emphasized to me that the Soviet Government not only will not intervene here but will also forbid others from intervening in our affairs."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Peter Grose, "U. S. Officials Express Concern Over Lebanese Clashes," The New York Times (October 24, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>102</sup>"U. S. Bars Intervention," The New York Times (October 26, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>103</sup>Bernard Gwertzman, "Soviet Says Crisis in an Arab Issue," The New York Times (October 26, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>104</sup>Peter Grose, "U. S. Aides Feel Soviet May Gain in Beirut," The New York Times (October 28, 1969), p. 3.



Although this demonstration of American inability to influence events in the Middle East was certainly a consequence of a complex of events which transcend the change in naval relationships in the eastern Mediterranean produced by the forward deployment of the Soviet Navy, the impotence of United States policy in this particular instance was fundamentally a result of the perceived danger of provoking a naval confrontation with the USSR over a non-vital issue.<sup>105</sup> The presence of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron had been combined with other diplomatic behavior in an exercise of active naval suasion which deterred American intervention.

#### THE SUCCESS OF THE SOVIET NAVY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY

By deploying its naval forces in the waters of the region, the Soviet Union has introduced an important force into the politics of the Middle East. That the Soviet Navy has been employed successfully as an instrument of foreign policy throughout the region is apparent from the instances of naval suasion documented in this chapter.

Overstatement and Misstatement of Success. Given such evidence, however, there are apparent tendencies to overstate or to misstate the success of the Soviet Navy as an

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<sup>105</sup>Richard Halloran, "U. S. Aides Fear a 'Major Tragedy' in Lebanon," The New York Times (October 25, 1969), p. 10.



instrument of Moscow's foreign policy in the Middle East-- either to credit the Soviet Navy alone with such achievements as the acquisition of needed shore support facilities or to dub it the "neutralizer of the Sixth Fleet," for example, or not to perceive its primary importance as a symbol of the USSR's power and influence in the region which has enabled other instruments of Soviet foreign policy to operate under more favorable circumstances.

While the Kremlin's claims to being a Middle Eastern power have been rendered much more credible and its influence and position in the region have been greatly enhanced by the presence of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron and other elements of the Soviet Navy deployed there, neither the erosion of American influence in the Middle East nor the political gains which Moscow has achieved throughout the region may be ascribed exclusively or even primarily to the Soviet naval presence. Other aspects of Moscow's foreign policy appear to have been of paramount importance. In the cases of Cairo and Damascus, for example, the notable political gains which the Kremlin achieved during the late 1960s must be attributed primarily to the military, economic, and political support which Moscow extended to these two countries in their confrontation with Israel.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, Egypt's President Sadat has acknowledged that it was in payment for the Soviet resupply effort after the Six Day

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<sup>106</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 340.





War that Cairo granted the use of naval facilities at Alexandria, Port Said, and Mersa Matruh to the Soviet Navy.<sup>107</sup>

Other pragmatic foreign policy initiatives emphasizing maritime aid--the provision of naval vessels and development of ports which are not functions of the Soviet Navy<sup>108</sup>--extended to regimes ranging from "reactionary" monarchies to "progressive" nationalists have secured access for the Soviet Navy to many excellent ports throughout the Middle East--Hodeida on the Red Sea, Berbera and Aden on the Gulf of Aden, and Basra and Umm Qasr at the head of the Persian Gulf<sup>109</sup>--which have been vital to Soviet naval operations in the Indian Ocean because of the closure of the Suez Canal<sup>110</sup> and will enhance its presence "east of Suez"<sup>111</sup> once the canal is reopened. The success of the Soviet Navy, in short, is as an integral part of the Soviet foreign policy effort in the Middle East.

Perhaps most indicative of the Soviet Navy's success as an instrument of foreign policy was a statement made by an increasingly disenchanted President Sadat in December, 1967, which at once reflected his resentment of Moscow's

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<sup>107</sup>Lawrence W. Whetten, "The Military Consequences of Mediterranean Super Power Parity," The New Middle East No. 38 (November 1971), p. 16.

<sup>108</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>109</sup>Klieman, op. cit., pp. 55-62; Wynfred Joshua, Soviet Penetration into the Middle East, New York, National Strategy Information Center, Inc., 1971, pp. 30-31.

<sup>110</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>111</sup>Joshua, loc. cit.





growing hold over Egypt and the effects of Soviet naval suasion. While admitting that he was eager to send such Soviet military units as the air defense missile units home, Sadat expressed a sincere reluctance to evict the Soviet Navy from its facilities in Egypt "because they stood by us in our darkest days."<sup>112</sup> When, in July, 1972, Sadat announced his decision to reduce the Soviet military presence in Egypt, his initial order specifically exempted some of the naval facilities enjoyed by the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.<sup>113</sup> Although the Soviet Navy retained limited access to port facilities in Alexandria and Mersa Matruh,<sup>114</sup> the loss of its naval air reconnaissance capabilities struck a blow at its potential political effectiveness in the Middle East by reducing its overall operational capability.<sup>115</sup> Moscow's subsequent attempts to strengthen its ties with Syria, where ships of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron began to call frequently at the ports of Latakia and Tartus and the Soviets began to construct a submarine base near Ras Shamra,<sup>116</sup> and Iraq reflect efforts

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<sup>112</sup>"Sadat: 'We Are Now Back to Square One,'" Newsweek (December 13, 1971), p. 43.

<sup>113</sup>George Lenczowski, "Egypt and the Soviet Exodus," Current History, Vol 64, No. 377 (January 1973), p. 16.

<sup>114</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>115</sup>Strategic Survey: 1972, London, The Institute for Strategic Studies, 1972, p. 62.

<sup>116</sup>Walter Laqueur, Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics, New York, Bantam Books, 1974, pp. 23-24.



to reduce the effects of the setback in Egypt.<sup>117</sup>

The presence of the Soviet Navy in the eastern Mediterranean has certainly limited the ability of the Sixth Fleet to intervene unilaterally in local crises,<sup>118</sup> but any conclusion to the effect that this capability has been completely eroded would also be an overstatement and a misstatement of the success of Soviet naval suasion. The crisis of the Jordanian civil war in 1970 demonstrated that, although the Soviet naval presence in the Middle East has restricted the range of options open to United States policy makers as evidenced in the case of Lebanon in 1969 described above, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron has not neutralized the Sixth Fleet in all circumstances.<sup>119</sup> Although the stakes which could justify American action have been raised by an unknown degree as a result of the Soviet naval presence,<sup>120</sup> where these stakes are deemed to be high enough, the United States is still capable of intervention.<sup>121</sup> When the Syrians moved to intervene with tank forces in Jordan's battle with the Palestinian guerillas, the United

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<sup>117</sup>Smolansky in Current History (January 1973), op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>118</sup>Evron, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>119</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, loc. cit.

<sup>120</sup>Gary G. Sick, "Russia and the West in the Mediterranean: Perspectives for the 1970s," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXII, No. 10 (June, 1970), p. 54.

<sup>121</sup>Coral Bell, The Conventions of Crisis, New York Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 113.



States employed the Sixth Fleet--augmented into an overwhelming force by the emergency deployment of a third attack aircraft carrier, the USS John F. Kennedy--to support King Hussein and to deter Syrian involvement (see Chapter IV, pp. 119-121). Although shadowed by the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron throughout this operation, the Sixth Fleet showed no signs of being inhibited as it operated freely<sup>122</sup> to signal American intentions and deter Syrian action.<sup>123</sup>

The Media and Success. Much of the overstatement which has contributed to Moscow's successful political exploitation of the Soviet Navy in the Middle East may be attributed to perceptions generated around the world not only by Soviet propaganda statements but by the sudden and vociferous awareness of the Western media of the fact that the Soviet Union has a navy which goes to sea.

Unlike the American media, which feature reportage and official statements which constantly magnify Soviet naval power while emphasizing the inadequacy of American naval forces and capabilities and reflect the present American mood of retrenchment and self-denigration, the Soviet media always stress the power of the Soviet Union and the

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<sup>122</sup>Admiral Issac C. Kidd, Jr., "View From the Bridge of the Sixth Fleet Flagship," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol 98, No. 2 (February 1972), pp. 25-27.

<sup>123</sup>Bell, op. cit., p. 344.





strength of its forces.<sup>124</sup> According to Luttwak:<sup>125</sup>

The endless official U. S. statements (from CNO on down) which describe American ships as "old," "obsolete," "inadequate," et cetera are not duplicated on the Russian side. The Russians instead denigrate American power and especially those forces which would be most impressive to third party observers (i.e., the carriers--though this is no longer so now that the Russians are building their own carriers).

The following statement from the Soviet press is not only representative of the positive approach taken by the Soviet media but also reflects its apparent success in evoking perceptions favorable to the political application of naval force:<sup>126</sup>

The situation is different now in the Mediterranean, where the Soviet ships are a mighty factor in peace and the security of peoples. "The presence of the Soviet Fleet," the Algerian newspaper Actualite states, "objectively contributes to the establishment of a balance of forces in the face of the notorious U. S. Sixth Fleet, which represents a constant threat."

The very presence of our ships restrains the imperialist aggressors and their confederates.

Alarmist, and often ill-informed, Western comment has brought the Soviet Union political benefits which the Soviet Navy could never have achieved on its own. The insistence of some American commentators that the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean perforce neutralizes the Sixth

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<sup>124</sup>Luttwak in Naval War College Review (November-December 1973), op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Captain V. Pushton, Krasnaya Zvezda (February 15, 1969), translated in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press (March 5, 1969) and quoted in Patterson, op. cit., p. 33.



Fleet and paralyzes Western naval initiatives in the region delivered a substantial--and undeserved--propaganda success to Moscow. Although alarmism may have been considered necessary to arouse a sense of concern in NATO or to extract funds from a reluctant U. S. Congress, it also provided useful instruction to the Kremlin on how to distress the West through a relatively small diversion of resources.<sup>127</sup> Perhaps more important, such alarmist reactions in the Western media to the Soviet naval build-up in the Middle East may have enhanced the prestige and strength of both the perceptions and the positions of those in the Soviet decision-making hierarchy who favor the increased offensive political use of naval power<sup>128</sup> to the real detriment of the Western position. As Michael McGwire so aptly stated the case:<sup>129</sup>

In the late 1950s the Soviet Union derived substantial political benefits from the publicising by Western commentators of the mythical Bomber and Missile Gaps, and the ease with which the West can still be induced to credit their opponents with an exaggerated military capability must be a source of continuing gratification to Soviet leaders. It conceals their technological inadequacies from critical world opinion, and allows them to make retrospective claims to have influenced the outcome of events in situations where they have sat by helpless, as selfishly worried spectators. It is significant that well into 1968, the Russians remained understandably silent about their negative contribution to the outcome of the June

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<sup>127</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Level of Analysis--Its Effect on Assessments," in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>128</sup>Griffiths, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>129</sup>McGwire, op. cit., p. 3.



war, concentrating their propaganda on linking the presence of the U. S. Sixth Fleet with the Israeli attack; but by 1969, the Soviets were emboldened to play back the West's more alarmist assessments, and now claim that it was the Russian naval presence which saved the Arabs from imperialist intervention in 1967.

A Changing Mission for the Soviet Navy? Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that, at least in the eastern Mediterranean, the primary mission of the Soviet Navy in the Middle East may indeed be changing from that of strategic defense which originally powered its forward deployment into the region to one of active exercise of naval suasion to implement Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East.

The growth of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron in the past few years has coincided with the decreasing importance to the United States of the Mediterranean as a nuclear strike launching area. When, in the late 1950s, Soviet Navy surface warships were only occasional visitors, the aircraft carriers of the Sixth Fleet sustained the U. S. Navy's entire contribution to the American strategic deterrent and the eastern Mediterranean provided their most advantageous launch points. Today, however, ballistic missile submarines rather than carrier-based strike aircraft provide most of the sea-based nuclear strike potential of the United States. Because only a small percentage of the strategic strike capability is retained by the Sixth Fleet's carriers, the destruction of all American surface forces in the Mediterranean would only slightly reduce the American





capacity to devastate the territory of the Soviet Union.<sup>130</sup> in the event of a general war. As far as the Soviet Navy's ability to defend the USSR against the U. S. Navy's ballistic missile submarine is concerned, Rear Admiral Levering Smith, who ran the Polaris program, observed in 1971 that the Soviets had not detected a single submarine on patrol in more than ten years of operation.<sup>131</sup> Even if an effective anti-submarine warfare capability dependent upon aircraft and surface ships eventually is developed by the Soviet Navy, such a breakthrough will be swiftly countered as the longer range Poseidon system makes the Mediterranean an obsolete patrol area for American submarines just as Moscow has begun to counter the threat there.<sup>132</sup>

If, indeed, the primary mission of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron remains one of strategic defense, the past few years seem to have witnessed the Soviet Union in hot pursuit of a shrinking prize with increasingly larger forces. As a primary mission of strategic defense becomes either impossible as a result of the change in the threat from surface to subsurface systems or increasingly irrelevant should technological advances cause removal of the threat, it may become increasingly worthwhile to pursue other goals with the increasing proportion of surface

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<sup>130</sup>Cable, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

<sup>131</sup>George C. Wilson in The Washington Post (May 31, 1971), no page number.

<sup>132</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 333.





warships available for peacetime foreign policy missions.<sup>133</sup> Whether or not and when this trend toward change in the primary mission of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East is extended to influence the mission structure of Soviet naval forces in the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean in response to future generations of U. S. Navy ballistic missile submarine capabilities remains to be seen.

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<sup>133</sup>Cable, op. cit., pp. 139-141.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOVIET NAVY: A CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

As those who shape American foreign policy search for approaches applicable to the many problems of the Middle East in the 1970s, the persistence of disputes within the region--between Israel and the Arab states, among the Arabs themselves, between Turks and Greeks over Cyprus, between Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf--will increase the probability of continued and more intense superpower involvement in the region--either to exploit the disputes for their own purposes or to resolve certain conflicts which threaten their interests<sup>1</sup>--and make appropriate responses to Moscow's activities there of continuing concern to the United States.

An appropriate approach to the political application of naval force in support of American foreign policy responses to the Soviet naval challenge in the Middle East would be, essentially, one which eschewed the simplistic shibboleth of maintaining the so-called naval "balance of power" to provide a naval force structure which may be

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<sup>1</sup>Quandt, op. cit., p. 55.



utilized as required to evoke suasion effects essential to the successful pursuit of American policy within the complex political environment of the region. While perceptions of such a "balance" may be important as a commonly held concept among at least some of those to be influenced, the construct itself represents an unrealistic attempt to escape the complexity of foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

Extreme and simplistic approaches to the complexities of the Middle East are inappropriate. Because a total United States disengagement from the Middle East and its problems would, in effect, deliver the region to the USSR--placing Israel and the friendly Arab states as well as the waters of the region under Soviet hegemony to benefit Moscow's efforts to become a global power at the cost of American interests and strategic mobility<sup>3</sup>--such a response, which has not gone without advocates in the post-Vietnam era of retrenchment,<sup>4</sup> would not be an appropriate one. Likewise, while policy responses based entirely upon non-military diplomatic, economic, and moral resources would be preferable to the application of military force to the

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<sup>2</sup>Robert J. Pranger, American Policy for Peace in the Middle East 1969-1971: Problems of Principle, Maneuver, and Time, Washington, D. C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1971, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Henry Brandon, The Retreat of American Power, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972, p. 127: "Senator [Mike] Mansfield [is one who] believes . . . that the Sixth Fleet should not remain in the Mediterranean."





solution of international political problems, it would be naive to expect that such an approach could succeed in a world of "power politics" in which Soviet-American detente remains an ambiguous intangible<sup>5</sup> and in which "it is not even certain that national capacities for inflicting violence internationally have ceased to be the principal component of international power."<sup>6</sup> Hopefully, at some time in the not-too-distant future, non-military approaches will represent realistic alternatives in international politics. In the meantime, however, in a time when diplomacy must be bulwarked by military strength if it is to be credible,<sup>7</sup> the presence of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Middle East is a reality with which the United States must deal in kind.

As long as the threat of escalation to nuclear war looms over any potential United States-Soviet military engagement, the probability of a shooting war between the superpowers remains small. Consequently, the driving force behind the superpower naval rivalry in the Middle East is not the fear that either side will achieve a military

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<sup>5</sup>Drew Middleton, "Soviet Military Might Grows Under Detente," The Denver Post (July 21, 1974), p. 24; Dana Adams Schmidt, "Detente--Does It Mean Same to Both Sides?" The Christian Science Monitor (August 1, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Klaus Knorr, On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup>U. S. Congress, House, U. S. Interests in and Policy Toward the Persian Gulf, p. 2.



advantage sufficient to initiate large-scale conflict but the fear of the political consequences of any perceived significant change in their relative naval power.<sup>8</sup> For the United States, which has long enjoyed a position of overwhelming naval superiority in the region, the fear is that some Middle Eastern nations,<sup>9</sup>

perceiving the naval (and more general military) balance to be turning toward the Soviet Union, would be reluctant to associate themselves with the United States, would make concessions to the Soviet Union inimical to U. S. interests, and would eventually be drawn closer to the Soviet orbit. Beyond this, there is concern that growing Soviet naval capabilities may increase Soviet willingness to take risks in bringing pressure to bear on other countries and may diminish U. S. willingness to assume comparable risks.

Thus, in terms of the political application of naval force in the Middle East, the requirement for effectively exercising naval suasion exists on two levels: the superpowers vis-a-vis the Middle Eastern countries and the superpowers vis-a-vis each other.

There is sufficient evidence today--such as the increasing strength of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron<sup>10</sup> and Moscow's continuing efforts to obtain port facilities in India<sup>11</sup> in anticipation of the expansion of its naval

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<sup>8</sup>Blechman, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>Middleton in The New York Times (January 25, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup>Bernard Weinraub, "India and Soviet Will Expand Ties," The New York Times (November 29, 1973), p. 9.



squadron in the Indian Ocean following the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1975<sup>12</sup>--of increasing emphasis on the peacetime and crisis use of the Soviet Navy for political purposes in the Middle East to make readily apparent the need for ensuring that the U. S. Navy's forces in the region are fully capable of accomplishing their missions as instruments of American foreign policy there--both the projection of United States power and influence and the countering of Moscow's efforts to project its own influence.<sup>13</sup>

The challenge which the Soviet Navy presents to American foreign policy in the Middle East, then, is essentially that of developing, deploying, and directing in the waters of the region a U. S. Navy force structure of sufficient visibility and viability to be perceived as credible enough by both Moscow and the Middle Eastern capitals to evoke the suasion and countersuasion effects required to promote the interests and objectives of the United States in the region. Application of the concept of the political application of naval force facilitates identification of both appropriate and inappropriate policy responses to the Soviet Navy's challenge in both the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the area "east of Suez."

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<sup>12</sup>Drew Middleton, "Suez Reopening. Weighed by Cairo, Seen Bolstering Soviet Position," The New York Times (November 11, 1973), p. 26.

<sup>13</sup>Blechman, loc. cit.





## CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

## A POLICY OF SURROGATION?

As one possible response to the Soviet challenge in the Middle East the United States, following a major re-examination of American defense commitments around the world at the impetus of the overwhelming passage by the Senate in 1969 of the "national commitment" resolution which informed the President that vague commitments leading to wars such as the one in Vietnam would meet with widespread congressional opposition, began moving toward a so-called "policy of surrogation" in the early 1970s when it appeared that the mood of the American people would allow no other.<sup>14</sup> Under this policy, the aim "is not to maximize [United States] military capabilities within the Middle East, but to augment them by the utilization of local military forces . . . of proven capability."<sup>15</sup> Toward this end, the United States considered the possibility of enlisting Turkey and Israel--the only Middle Eastern nations then possessing military forces of demonstrated effectiveness<sup>16</sup>--as surrogates, continued assistance to the Iranian Navy to enable the Shah to establish hegemony over the Persian Gulf as London withdrew its operational forces from that area,<sup>17</sup> and additional military assistance

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<sup>14</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 39.





to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>18</sup>

Such a policy, however, would seem an inappropriate one for the United States on at least two counts. First, in order to be effective, it would require dependable surrogates whose interests parallel those of the United States. Because "Turkey . . . is pursuing a political future that must give first priority to alleviating certain internal political stresses" which renders "the Turkish military machine of doubtful use even in areas compatible with American interests,"<sup>19</sup> only Israel could be considered a possible surrogate in the eastern Mediterranean. However, because Israel "has foreign policy aims that cannot automatically be equated with [those of the United States]" and "the Israeli navy is being developed to perform limited functions as required by Israeli military considerations," the policy of surrogation would severely limit the United States' "range of policy alternatives . . . to those compatible with [Israeli] interests"<sup>20</sup> and would mean "little more than letting the State of Israel defend herself."<sup>21</sup> While domination of the Persian Gulf by a surrogate Iranian Navy would probably prove compatible with American interests there, a change of regimes in Tehran which brought

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<sup>18</sup>"Policeman of the Persian Gulf," Time (August 6, 1973), p. 30.

<sup>19</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 40.



radical Iranian nationalists to power "could render the Iranian naval force in the Gulf a threat rather than a surrogate for American military might."<sup>22</sup>

Second, and perhaps more important, is the fact that, even if dependable surrogates with which a substantial confluence of interests did exist were available in the Middle East, pursuit of such a policy to the extent that a surrogate naval presence were to be installed as a substitute for a substantial American naval presence could preclude the effective political application of naval force insofar as American interests in the area were concerned. While the surrogate navy would possibly be able to perform the same conventional military function, it could not, because it would not represent the national power of the United States, perform the political function of evoking the suasion effects--both latent and active--that a credible American presence symbolic of American power could evoke. Moreover, the absence of a United States naval presence in favor of a surrogate naval presence could be perceived by both Kremlin and Middle Eastern leaders as a signal of declining American interest and resolve in the area which could result in misunderstandings of potentially disastrous consequences.

While friendly Middle Eastern navies may promote American interests in the region, surrogation is no panacea for

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 39.



American policy there primarily because surrogate forces are not representative of American concern and power and, therefore, are unable to evoke the suasion effects which could be evoked by the credible presence of the U. S. Navy--a presence clearly representative of United States interests.

#### CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The forward deployment of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron in waters once dominated by the U. S. Sixth Fleet has been documented above. At this writing, many of the newest and most advanced combatants of the Soviet Navy number among the approximately 55 ships<sup>23</sup> which ply the Mediterranean in pursuit of the Kremlin's avowed policy of undermining and eventually eliminating American influence in the Middle East: an article in Izvestia in late 1968 stated that "the Mediterranean must become a sea of peace" and that "this great goal . . . can be achieved only through . . . the liquidation of . . . the U. S. political and military system in the Mediterranean."<sup>24</sup> Soon, the new "Kiev"-class aircraft carrier--Moscow's first "full-fledged" carrier--is expected to venture out of the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean<sup>25</sup> to join the political

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<sup>23</sup>"Fleet Acting Normally Near Cyprus," Rocky Mountain News (August 15, 1974), p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>25</sup>Dana Adams Schmidt, "U. S.'s Quiet Role in Indian Ocean," The Christian Science Monitor (January 29, 1974), p. 7.





battle for men's minds which is the essence of the super-power naval rivalry in the Middle East. Because, according to Western intelligence services, Soviet construction of surface ships and submarines will continue at its present pace, increased deployment in the Indian Ocean following the reopening of the Suez Canal--a challenge addressed below--is not expected to result in a reduction of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.<sup>26</sup> This is a challenge, not to any chauvenistic ideal of American military supremacy<sup>27</sup> but to the flexibility and effectiveness of American foreign policy in the Middle East which requires an appropriate naval response.

American policy makers must determine what that response must be. To date, they appear to have been reacting to the Soviet Navy's challenge with caution. Although the inclination of many American admirals was to enlarge and diversify the Sixth Fleet, the political decision was to maintain the status quo and the United States naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea has been neither permanently expanded nor contracted since June, 1967, when it first became obvious that Moscow could maintain a credible naval force there. Congress, reflecting the new attitude of the American public concerning foreign military

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<sup>26</sup> Middleton in The New York Times (January 25, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>27</sup> "Back to the Gunboats," The Christian Science Monitor (May 1, 1974), p. F8.



commitments--an attitude which grew out of frustration at the United States' inability to win either a political or military victory in Vietnam and fear that other commitments could lead to "new Vietnams"--has been reluctant to permit the Navy to accept new obligations.<sup>28</sup> Some senators--and even the U. S. Navy, although for somewhat different reasons explained below--have considered the desirability of withdrawing one of the Sixth Fleet's two carrier task forces.<sup>29</sup> Often, it would appear, in what James Reston has termed "disenchantment and even bitterness about the cost and complexity of world affairs" and "weariness and resentment at the price of American leadership,"<sup>30</sup> some representatives of the American conscience appear to have lost sight of the fact that, for American diplomacy to be credible, the Soviet Union and the Middle Eastern states must perceive that the United States' resolve is fixed and that, although it would prefer non-military diplomatic settlements of disputes, it is prepared to apply force when necessary.<sup>31</sup>

The Sixth Fleet and the Six Day War. The importance of the Sixth Fleet to American diplomacy in the Middle East prior

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<sup>28</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>James Reston, "The Angry Hangover," The New York Times (October 29, 1971), p. 41.

<sup>31</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 16.



to the Soviet Navy's accelerated contestation of its dominance in the eastern Mediterranean was perhaps best illustrated by its application during the events leading up to the Six Day War as well as during the war itself.

When the crisis broke in the middle of May, 1967, most of the Sixth Fleet was in the western Mediterranean. Correctly anticipating that American policy would be to stand aloof from military involvement, if possible, and to maintain a low military profile which would allow the greatest possible latitude for diplomatic maneuver while remaining available if needed, the naval command moved its forces eastward in a way which clearly signalled Washington's intentions. First, by moving ships already at sea eastward, the United States demonstrated its concern but, by not interrupting any scheduled visit in any Mediterranean port to deploy ships ahead of schedule, also provided a clear signal that it was not rushing headlong into the affair. Reported immediately by newspapers throughout Europe, this signal was clearly understood by all concerned. Second, to reinforce Washington's posture of no military involvement, the Sixth Fleet's amphibious force of almost 2,000 Marines left Naples on schedule in the third week of May only to put in immediately at Malta where all concerned could see them--a thousand miles away from the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean. Third, by not steaming all the way to the coasts of Egypt or Israel, but by operating well over 300 miles from Suez and 200 miles from Egypt's





western desert (i.e., roughly west of a line running from Libya's Jebel Akhdar to the eastern end of Crete) in close proximity to Soviet ships, the United States further indicated its attitude. Thus, according to J. C. Wylie, the Sixth Fleet's move to readiness during the Arab-Israeli mobilization had three careful diplomatic signals built into it: no premature departures from scheduled port visits; the deliberate and visible retention of the amphibious forces in the central Mediterranean; and the purposeful positioning of American forces well clear of the prospective scene of action. In addition, by not placing the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid, which was transiting the Mediterranean enroute to the Gulf of Tonkin, under the operational control of the Sixth Fleet as was customary, but retaining it as a separate unit directly under the Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Navy, Europe, in London who requested Intrepid's transit through the Suez Canal, the Navy ostentatiously avoided the impression that the Sixth Fleet was being reinforced in response to the crisis.<sup>32</sup>

Once the war began and American and Soviet naval forces had moved closer to the combat zone, the exercise of naval suasion by the Sixth Fleet deterred Moscow from intervening on behalf of its Arab clients. When, at one point, the Kremlin apparently decided to threaten Israel

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<sup>32</sup>J. C. Wylie, "The Sixth Fleet and American Diplomacy," in Hurewitz, ed., Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East, pp. 58-60.





with Soviet intervention, Washington was able to persuade Moscow, by merely shifting the cruising range of the Sixth Fleet from 100 miles off the Syrian coast to 50 miles, that any such move would result in a confrontation with the United States.<sup>33</sup> According to Pfaff:<sup>34</sup>

The orders given to move the fleet closer to the Syrian coast in response to the Russian threat were immediately relayed to Moscow by Russian submarines monitoring the Sixth Fleet. This was exactly what was intended to happen. The Soviet Union got the message.

Thus the Sixth Fleet, a formidable combat force, functioned during the Six Day War as a sensitive and responsive tool of American foreign policy to evoke naval suasion effects on behalf of United States interests--in this case, the continued existence and well-being of the State of Israel--in the Middle East.

The Sixth Fleet Since the Six Day War. Were it not challenged by the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, the Sixth Fleet would remain the dominant force in the eastern Mediterranean which it was for almost a quarter century following World War II. In recent years, however, increases in the Soviet Navy's presence in the Mediterranean Sea have overtaken the Sixth Fleet numerically and, while it may remain the most powerful force in the area, its position has become uncertain and its movements are no longer

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<sup>33</sup>Pfaff, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



free from possible challenge.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, although its relative power has been diminished by the deployment of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron as well as by the development of indigenous Middle Eastern air power which has relegated its carrier air wings to the status of a "small" air force by local standards (even though knowledgeable observers would not presume to equate locally-deployed aircraft with their U. S. Navy counterparts on a one-for-one basis), the Sixth Fleet remains a viable and valuable instrument of American foreign policy in the Middle East. While the Sixth Fleet's political effectiveness has been derogated insofar as it represents "local" American military power which may be brought to bear in order to affect the outcome of a confrontation, it retains the symbolic power--subject, of course, to others' perceptions of domestic American attitudes toward foreign commitments which affect the magnitude of that power--which is the essence of that effectiveness.<sup>36</sup> In other words:<sup>37</sup>

. . . where the commitment of the Fleet implies the commitment of American power in all its dimensions, including diplomatic "triangulation" on the Soviet Union (in order to induce the Russians to control their clients), the actual relative capabilities of the Fleet per se do not determine its overall political effectiveness. . . . it is the overall political context that [determines] the effectiveness of the Fleet.

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<sup>35</sup>Dadant, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

<sup>36</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., pp. 52-54.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



The continuing efficacy of and requirement for the Sixth Fleet as an instrument of American foreign policy in the Middle East was demonstrated both during the 1970 Jordanian civil war, which President Nixon later termed the "gravest threat to world peace since this Administration came to office,"<sup>38</sup> and during the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Precipitated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's hijackings of three Western airliners to the Jordanian desert in early September, heavy fighting between the fedayeen and the Jordanian army which broke out on September 16 threatened to topple King Hussein and his government.<sup>39</sup> As the fighting continued over the next few days, President Nixon, fearing either the establishment of a regime closely linked with Moscow<sup>40</sup> or a full-scale Arab-Israeli war<sup>41</sup> if Hussein were overthrown, discretely informed the world through a Chicago newspaper that he would be "inclined to intervene" on Jordan's behalf should Syria or Iraq join the fighting on the side of the Palestinians.<sup>42</sup> After an estimated 200 Syrian tanks did

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<sup>38</sup> Quandt in Journal of Palestine Studies, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Wells, "U. S.-Israeli Military Action on Jordan Was Envisioned," The New York Times (October 8, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Quandt, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>42</sup> Hedrick Smith, "Nixon Hints He May Act if Outsiders Join the Fight," The New York Times (September 19, 1970), pp. 1, 8.





indeed enter Jordan on September 19 and 20,<sup>43</sup> Hussein's appeal for outside help to turn back the invasion spurred the United States and Israel to plan for coordinated military action. According to this plan, Israel would attack the Syrian tank forces which had invaded Jordan if it appeared that Hussein's forces were incapable of stopping them; meanwhile, the Sixth Fleet would secure Israel's rear and flanks from Soviet or Egyptian attack.<sup>44</sup> However, Hussein's commitment of his own air force to do the job envisaged for the Israelis made execution of the plan unnecessary.<sup>45</sup> Harassed by Jordanian jets and armor, the Syrian tanks retreated into Syria.<sup>46</sup> As the Syrian government withheld its own air force and the Iraqis stood aside from the fray, the necessity for outside help to Hussein vanished. Within several days, under pressure from President Nasser, the war came to an end.<sup>47</sup>

Although the Sixth Fleet was not actually called upon to protect Israel as planned, its presence and operations in the eastern Mediterranean were essential to the combination of public and private diplomacy employed by Washington to bring the crisis to an end with American interests

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<sup>43</sup>Quandt, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>44</sup>Wells, loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup>Quandt, loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup>Wells, loc. cit.

<sup>47</sup>Quandt, loc. cit.



intact. Its obvious presence and much publicized reinforcement--at once the symbol and substance of American commitment--supported Washington's private warnings to Moscow to "lean on" the Syrians<sup>48</sup> and, presumably, the Iraqis, with the sobering effects noted above. In the language of suasion, it was an instance of active naval suasion, both coercive and supportive. In the coercive mode, negative deterrent suasion was evoked as a result of Washington's use of the Sixth Fleet to prevent a Soviet or other anti-Jordanian intervention and positive compellent suasion was reflected in the fleet-supported demand that Syria withdraw its armor. While the supportive element of this instance of active naval suasion appears to have been of secondary importance in light of the fact that Hussein was fully resolved to resist the Syrian attack, "the insurance provided by the 'projection' capabilities of the Sixth Fleet must have intruded on Jordanian calculations by reducing any incentive to a political settlement [of the conflict] and a fresh compromise with the Palestinian military organizations."<sup>49</sup>

While it is apparent that the conclusion drawn in some quarters from this instance that military considerations are more important than diplomatic ones<sup>50</sup>--or, in

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<sup>48</sup>Wells, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>49</sup>Luttwak, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Quandt, op. cit., p. 43.



the words of Horatio Nelson, that "warships are still the best negotiators in the world"<sup>51</sup>--is unwarranted, it is equally apparent that credible naval forces capable of evoking the desired suasion effects remain an important adjunct to American foreign policy in the Middle East.

More recent experience has reinforced this conclusion. Although outnumbered by a Soviet Mediterranean Squadron augmented from a normal 60 to approximately 90 ships,<sup>52</sup> the Sixth Fleet appears to have effectively exercised naval suasion as recently as the Yom Kippur War of 1973. For example, it is doubtful indeed that the Israeli Navy, which played an important combat role against both Syria and Egypt, could have sunk 43 Arab vessels in and, once gaining local superiority, attacked Syrian and Egyptian port and naval facilities<sup>53</sup> from waters dominated by the Soviet Navy. It is reasonable to conclude that the presence of the Sixth Fleet deterred Soviet naval intervention against the Israeli Navy on behalf of their Arab clients and thereby supported Israel.

Since the Yom Kippur War, the active presence of the U. S. Navy in the eastern Mediterranean has made a significant contribution to the cause of American-Egyptian

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<sup>51</sup>Robert D. Heinl, Jr., "Navy Adding to Muscle in Indian Ocean," Navy Times (February 20, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>52</sup>Middleton, loc. cit.

<sup>53</sup>Lawrence Whetten and Michael Johnson, "Military Lessons of the Yom Kippur War," The World Today, Vol. 30, No. 3 (March 1974), p. 109.





rapprochement. At the invitation of President Sadat,<sup>54</sup> the United States agreed early in 1974 to help clear the Suez Canal and make it available again to international shipping.<sup>55</sup> By early June, the U. S. Navy's Mine Warfare Force had completed its minesweeping operations in the canal weeks ahead of schedule,<sup>56</sup> paving the way for the remainder of the year-long U. S. Navy-assisted project which Egypt is confident will play a central role in its future prosperity.<sup>57</sup> Two months later--and only two months after an American official was quoted as saying that "the time was not ripe" for an appearance of the Sixth Fleet commander on Egyptian soil,<sup>58</sup>--the light guided missile cruiser USS Little Rock with the Commander, U. S. Sixth Fleet, embarked, entered Alexandria harbor for a four-day port call to the greetings of small boats and shouted welcomes of Egyptian seamen. It was the first time since 1962 that a Sixth Fleet flagship had visited an Egyptian port.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>John K. Cooley, "U. S. Helps Egypt Clear Suez Canal," The Christian Science Monitor (June 27, 1974), p. F1.

<sup>55</sup>"U. S. Agrees to Help Egypt Clear Suez Canal of Mines," The Christian Science Monitor (March 19, 1974), p. 6.

<sup>56</sup>"Suez Sweep Finished Early," Navy Times (June 19, 1974), p. 33.

<sup>57</sup>Cooley, loc. cit.

<sup>58</sup>Navy Times, loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup>"Fleet Flagship Makes Stopover in Alexandria," Navy Times (August 28, 1974), p. 26.





The purpose of the Sixth Fleet, a credible naval force capable of carrying out a wide variety of operations,<sup>60</sup> has been shown to be essentially a political one of exercising naval suasion. While its presence has not stopped the spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East,<sup>61</sup> the Sixth Fleet has prevented Moscow from freely exerting military pressure on political situations in the region by virtue of the fact that the Kremlin alone would otherwise possess the visible military force capable of influencing decisions.<sup>62</sup> While the Soviet naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean certainly has provided a measure of support and security for its Arab clients, it also, paradoxically, appears to have reinforced the general wariness of most of the Arab states of too close an association with Moscow and most Arab leaders, their public statements to the contrary notwithstanding, probably welcome the presence of the Sixth Fleet as an offset to the political impact of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.<sup>63</sup> If there had been no Sixth Fleet or the initiative to commit it when necessary during the past quarter century, "the Mediterranean, instead of changing slowly from a Western lake to an international sea, might long ago have become a Soviet sea."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Blechman in McGwire, op. cit., p. 446.

<sup>61</sup> Howe, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>62</sup> U. S. Congress, House, Soviet Involvement in the Middle East and the Western Response, p. 159.

<sup>63</sup> Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>64</sup> Howe, op. cit., p. 25.



The Sixth Fleet and the American Response. Retention in the Mediterranean Sea of a Sixth Fleet sufficiently configured and properly deployed to symbolize United States power and interest in the Middle East, therefore, appears essential to American foreign policy in the region. The purpose of this force is not now and will not be to assure victory in the event of war--the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron would act as a strategic defense suicide force in the event of a general war which would bypass the Middle East anyway--but to prevent adventurous Soviet moves should the Kremlin come to perceive its own naval strength in the region sufficient to cause the United States to back down in a crisis.<sup>65</sup>

This does not necessarily mean that the Sixth Fleet must be expanded or even be maintained at all times in its current numerical relationship to the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron as long as it is maintained as a modern, militarily strong, and credible force structured to possess those qualities of visibility and viability which will optimize its political impact on all concerned. Indeed, Secretary of the Navy John H. Chaffee argued before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1971 for a "flexible" force structure in the Mediterranean which would permit a reduction of the "two carrier" commitment to the Sixth Fleet.<sup>66</sup> In terms

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<sup>65</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>66</sup>P. A. Dur, "The U. S. Sixth Fleet: Search for Consensus," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 100, No. 4 (June 1974), pp. 22-23.



of the political application of naval force, a Sixth Fleet reduced in size by one carrier task force could continue to symbolize American power and represent American interest in the region and could be reinforced as required in times of crisis to communicate the same concern and evoke the same suasion effects as had previous reinforcements during crises and do so with a reduced total commitment of scarce naval resources.<sup>67</sup> In other words, according to this concept, reinforcement of a one-carrier Sixth Fleet with a second carrier would evoke the same suasion effects as the reinforcement of a two-carrier Sixth Fleet by a third carrier as was accomplished, for example, in the cases of the emergency deployment of the USS John F. Kennedy during the Jordanian civil war of 1970 and again during the Yom Kippur War of 1973.<sup>68</sup> The idea, however, apparently was quashed by some NATO countries<sup>69</sup> which for years have seemed content to allow the United States to bear the bulk of the Western burden in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern affairs<sup>70</sup> and whose declining defense expenditures (as a percentage of GNP) reflect a failure to cope with the real

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<sup>67</sup>Personal interview with Robert G. Weinland, staff member and Soviet Navy analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Virginia, on May 30, 1974.

<sup>68</sup>John W. Finney, "U. S. Carrier Force is Sent Toward Indian Ocean," The New York Times (October 30, 1973), p. 18.

<sup>69</sup>Weinland interview.

<sup>70</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., pp. 104-105.





prospects of a reduction in the American naval presence.<sup>71</sup>

Of course, the development of a Sixth Fleet force structure representative of and capable of implementing an appropriate American policy response to the political challenge of the Soviet Navy in the eastern Mediterranean is a task for political and naval operations analyses which transcend the scope of the present study. Secretary Chafee's proposal, which reflected not only the reduced size of the U. S. Navy but also a firm grasp of the principles underlying the political application of naval force, is representative of the options which must be explored if the United States is to retain its capability to exercise naval suasion in support of its policy in the Middle East. Certainly, any decision by the makers of American foreign policy which would impair this capability--such as an inordinate reduction of the Sixth Fleet's vital visibility and viability factors relative to those of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron or even a unilateral withdrawal of naval forces from the political context of the eastern Mediterranean--would be as inappropriate as it would be unrealistic.

#### CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE "EAST OF SUEZ"

Once the Suez Canal is reopened sometime in 1975, the challenge of the Soviet Navy to American foreign policy in

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<sup>71</sup>Dur, op. cit., p. 23.



the area of growing superpower interests<sup>72</sup> "east of Suez" is expected to increase substantially. Indeed, in spite of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's reassurances that the value of a reopened canal will far transcend the military problems raised,<sup>73</sup> the principal beneficiary of its reopening probably will be the Soviet Navy. While the economies of the Western world have adjusted to the closure of the Suez Canal since 1967 and the European nations which had extensive interests east of Suez prior to World War II--principally Britain, France, and Holland--no longer maintain appreciable military and naval forces in those areas and have seen their commerce with Middle Eastern and Far Eastern countries greatly depreciated,<sup>74</sup> the reopening of the canal has become essential to Soviet naval power--now a prime instrument for the extension of Moscow's political influence<sup>75</sup>--which easily could be doubled<sup>76</sup> to achieve naval superiority and political objectives<sup>77</sup> as a result.

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<sup>72</sup>U. S. Department of State, U. S. National Security Policy and the Indian Ocean, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup>Dana Adams Schmidt, "U. S. Aid to Follow Up in Mid-East?" The Christian Science Monitor (June 5, 1974), p. 2.

<sup>74</sup>Ira C. Eaker, "Opening Suez Would Aid Soviets," Navy Times (March 20, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>75</sup>Cottrell in The New Middle East (July 1971), op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>76</sup>Middleton in The New York Times (November 11, 1973), loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup>Eaker, loc. cit.



Ironically, it is not the Soviet Navy but the U. S. Navy, in pursuit of Washington's objective of improved relations with Egypt,<sup>78</sup> which has spearheaded the canal clearing operation.<sup>79</sup>

By the middle of 1974, the Soviet Navy was reported to have a squadron of more than 20 ships--about half of them modern combatants (including, for the first time, the "Moskva"-class helicopter carrier Leningrad) and the remainder auxiliaries--deployed forward in the Indian Ocean where, less than a decade ago, a Soviet naval presence was practically nonexistent.<sup>80</sup> For most nations on the Indian Ocean littoral, foreign influence was first exercised by sea power. While the Soviet Union as a great land power was, therefore, an abstraction to many leaders of these nations, visiting Soviet warships have shown that there are other naval powers than the United States and Britain in terms which they readily comprehend.<sup>81</sup> Although augmentation of Moscow's Indian Ocean squadron could conceivably prove politically counterproductive in light of the expressed opposition of some littoral governments to the

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<sup>78</sup>"Clearing Suez," The Christian Science Monitor (March 25, 1974), p. 8.

<sup>79</sup>John Leech, "Task of Clearing Suez Canal Begins," The Christian Science Monitor (April 5, 1974), p. 5.

<sup>80</sup>"Soviets Build Up Indian Ocean Fleet," The Christian Science Monitor (July 12, 1974), p. 12; Drew Middleton, "Indian Ocean Ships: Soviet 20, U. S. 3," The New York Times (October 31, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>81</sup>Jukes, op. cit., p. 11.





presence of superpower navies in the Indian Ocean,<sup>82</sup> it appears likely that an expanded Soviet naval presence there will require the development of new responses--especially in terms of the political application of naval force--to this challenge to American foreign policy in the Middle East.

The Middle East Force as a Response. At this writing, the only permanent operational naval presence maintained by the United States in Middle Eastern waters east of the Suez Canal is the small Middle East Force which has been stationed at Bahrain in the Persian Gulf since its creation in 1949.<sup>83</sup> In pursuit of its mission "to demonstrate, by visiting friendly countries [in its area of operations], the continuing interest of the United States in these countries and the desire of the United States to maintain good relations with them"<sup>84</sup> the Middle East Force--a rear admiral's command which consists of the USS LaSalle, a former amphibious transport configured as an auxiliary flagship, and two destroyers usually on a six month deployment from the U. S. Atlantic Fleet<sup>85</sup>--calls at ports over a two million square mile area ranging from the Persian

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<sup>82</sup>"Naval Rivalry in the Indian Ocean," The Christian Science Monitor (March 27, 1974), p. F8.

<sup>83</sup>U. S. Congress, House, U. S. Interests in and Policy Toward the Persian Gulf, p. 11.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 13.





Gulf and Red Sea to Sri Lanka "distributing 'handclasp' material from encyclopedias stamped with Uncle Sam's handshake to ice cream and movies."<sup>86</sup> In 1971, ships of the Middle East Force made 108 port calls in seventeen countries<sup>87</sup> and, in 1973, the Force conducted three major sea rescues.<sup>88</sup>

Following the Labor government's decision of January, 1968, to withdraw operational British military forces from east of Suez by the end of 1971 and the March, 1968, deployment of Soviet naval forces into the Indian Ocean on a sustained basis for the first time, a review of American policy toward the Persian Gulf resulted in the decision to retain the Middle East Force.<sup>89</sup> According to James H. Noyes, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern, African, and South Asian Affairs:<sup>90</sup>

It was believed that the continuation of our modest naval presence at Bahrain would contribute to the stability of the Persian Gulf as the small states of the area emerged into full independence, and that to withdraw MIDEASTFOR, especially when the British were leaving and the Soviet naval effort was increasing, would give the impression, already gaining ground in some Arab circles, that Western interest in the Persian Gulf was waning.

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<sup>86</sup>Joseph Fitchett, "U. S. Navy Must Prepare for Bahrain Withdrawal," The Christian Science Monitor (February 12, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>87</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>88</sup>Fitchett, loc. cit.

<sup>89</sup>U. S. Congress, House, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 12.



Critics of this decision, however, maintain that the Middle East Force, while it may represent American interests in the Persian Gulf area, does so rather ambiguously in that: (1) as a naval force, it is representative of neither American naval power nor national power; and (2) as a symbol of American interest, it is vague and confusing.<sup>91</sup> Admittedly not a particularly impressive presence in terms of force composition and technical sophistication --one American commentator has referred to it as a couple of "ancient World War II rust buckets,"<sup>92</sup> the Middle East Force has, in fact, been the subject of unflattering comment by local rulers and officials who have observed that its vessels are not nearly as modern as the Soviet Navy ships which began showing the flag prominently in the Gulf in 1968.<sup>93</sup> In addition, its critics contend that the maintenance of a permanent United States military unit in the area "is an indication somehow [to local observers] that we intend to do something with it"<sup>94</sup> and that if, indeed, American policy is not to become involved in the defense of the Persian Gulf, the presence of the Middle East Force stationed there may imply commitments which do not exist and, therefore, may be misleading.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, they

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>92</sup>Heinl in Navy Times (February 20, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>93</sup>Cottrell in The New Middle East (July 1970), op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>94</sup>U. S. Congress, House, loc. cit.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 10.



express concern that the presence of United States naval ships at Bahrain may well attract a similar, if not larger, permanent Soviet naval presence to the Persian Gulf.<sup>96</sup>

Urging that American policy makers "rethink the implications of maintaining a U. S. naval presence homeported in Bahrain,"<sup>97</sup> many suggest that a more appropriate and effective way for the United States to demonstrate its interest in the Gulf area would be through periodic visits of "roving fleet units" truly representative of the real sea power of the United States<sup>98</sup> and more impressively symbolic of its national power.

In terms of the concept of the political application of naval force, a strong case for altering the 1968 policy decision and replacing the Middle East Force with a periodic representative presence may now be made. While withdrawal of the Middle East Force at the time of British departure from and Soviet arrival in the Persian Gulf indeed could have communicated "a diminution of American interest"<sup>99</sup> in the area east of Suez, a new approach providing for periodic visits by more credible evidence of United States naval capabilities would appear a more appropriate vehicle for continued demonstration of American interest in and concern

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 95.





for this increasingly important part of the Middle East as it enhanced the U. S. Navy's ability to evoke suasion effects--by avoiding unfavorable comparisons with the Soviet naval presence--without running the risk of implying commitments which are not intended. Since the effective exercise of naval suasion depends upon others' perceptions of the naval force in question--its tactical capabilities as well as the political intentions which it represents--the Middle East Force, which at present may be perceived as too unimpressive when compared with the Soviet naval presence to evoke suasion effects in the event of a crisis, could be construed as somewhat detrimental to American interests in the area. Indeed, the maintenance of so inferior a presence could be perceived as symbolic of a lack of interest. Given the construction by Moscow of extensive naval facilities at Umm Qasr, fears that any continued U. S. Navy presence in the Persian Gulf would attract a permanent Soviet naval presence now seem irrelevant. Thus, the question has been and remains not so much one of the requirement for the United States to show the flag in that part of the world as one of how it should be done. "Perhaps," as Alvin J. Cottrell suggested, "an occasional visit by a carrier task force would serve to remind all concerned that the United States has a definite interest in the stability of the area."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Cottrell, op. cit., p. 21.



By late 1973, it appeared that the question of the Middle East Force's continued presence in the Persian Gulf might be settled by Bahrain itself which, not so much because of any dislike for the American presence as because it had to reckon with the attitudes of Egypt, decided during the Yom Kippur War to revoke the American lease to the former British facilities and informed Washington that it had one year in which to remove the U. S. Navy contingent from the island.<sup>101</sup> Although the ruling sheikh who canceled the lease in the heat of war subsequently stated, in the wake of recently improved relations between Egypt and the United States, that he would like the Middle East Force to remain on Bahrain, anti-American demonstrations which already had occurred on the heavily populated island have made the further usefulness of the facility questionable.<sup>102</sup> Thus, any future American naval presence east of the Suez Canal will probably have to be maintained from outside the Persian Gulf. If this presence is to consist of a carrier task force--certainly the most impressive symbol of American power afloat--the proposed construction of a naval and air station on the island of Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean takes on increased significance for American foreign policy in the Middle East.

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<sup>101</sup>Fitchett, loc. cit.; Drew Middleton, "U. S. Navy Setback Giving Soviet an Edge in Mideast," The New York Times (November 10, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>102</sup>Schmidt in The Christian Science Monitor (January 29, 1974), loc. cit.



Diego Garcia and the American Response. Prior to 1971, the American naval presence in the Indian Ocean area had been a persistently modest one. Washington did not rush to fill the so-called "vacuum" perceived by some as a result of the British departure and, with the exception of the small Middle East Force which made periodic shore visits throughout the western littoral of the region, the United States presence was limited to occasional transits of U. S. Navy ships, humanitarian missions in response to typhoon and flood emergencies, and the operation of communications stations in Western Australia and Asmara, Ethiopia. Uncertainty about the future of the installation in Asmara led Congress in 1971 to approve construction of a modest communications station on the small Chagos Archipelago island of Diego Garcia, a part of the British Indian Ocean Territory over 1,000 miles south of India<sup>103</sup> which was destined soon to take on greater strategic and political significance.

As the Soviet naval presence east of Suez increased, the United States responded by sending carrier task forces into the Indian Ocean twice in 1971, first in April and again in December during the Indo-Pakistani war.<sup>104</sup> The mission of the latter task force, led by the nuclear-powered

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<sup>103</sup>Howard Wriggins, "U. S. Interests in the Indian Ocean," in Cottrell and Burrell, op. cit., pp. 362-363.

<sup>104</sup>Richard J. Levine, "The Debate Over Diego Garcia," The Wall Street Journal (April 4, 1974), p. 18.





attack carrier USS Enterprise, was "to evacuate Americans from East Bengal if necessary" as well as "to impress the Indians and to counter [the presence of] any Soviet ships . . . in the region."<sup>105</sup> As the American ships returned to their normal area of operations in the Western Pacific early in 1972, the Pentagon announced that the U. S. Navy would be seen more often and in greater strength in the Indian Ocean in the future.<sup>106</sup> The last United States aircraft carrier to visit the Indian Ocean pursuant to this policy announcement was the USS America in March, 1973.<sup>107</sup>

By October, 1973, the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath--including the Arab oil embargo and the cancellation of the Middle East Force's lease on station facilities in Bahrain as well as the projected reopening of the Suez Canal--had combined to increase Washington's interest in the Indian Ocean and to focus attention on this latest arena of superpower naval rivalry.<sup>108</sup> The first symbol of this increased interest was the sudden deployment to the area of a task force led by the aging carrier USS Hancock which was detached from the U. S. Seventh Fleet during the

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<sup>105</sup>"Naval Rivalry," Time (January 17, 1972), p. 26.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Finney in The New York Times (October 30, 1973), loc. cit.

<sup>108</sup>The Christian Science Monitor (March 27, 1974), loc. cit.





war.<sup>109</sup> On the following November 30, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, disclosing that the Hancock would be relieved by the USS Oriskany, announced that the U. S. Navy would establish a "pattern of regular visits into the Indian Ocean" and that the American "presence there [would] be more frequent and more regular than in the past."<sup>110</sup> Since then, major U. S. Navy combatants have been deployed in the Indian Ocean almost constantly<sup>111</sup> as a demonstration, in the words of one American admiral, that "the Indian Ocean is not a Russian lake."<sup>112</sup>

To support this presence, the United States and Great Britain agreed to expand an existing U. S. Navy communications station on Diego Garcia into a naval and air station capable of refueling and resupplying American warships-- including aircraft carriers<sup>113</sup>--and accommodating long-range

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<sup>109</sup>Schmidt., loc. cit.

<sup>110</sup>Levine, loc. cit.

<sup>111</sup>In February, 1974, the Oriskany was relieved as flagship of the U. S. Navy force in the Indian Ocean by the nuclear-powered guided missile frigate USS Bainbridge which, in turn, was relieved in March by the attack carrier USS Kitty Hawk. After an apparent two-month hiatus in the American naval presence, the "routine" presence of the guided missile cruiser USS Chicago, two destroyers, and an oiler in the Indian Ocean was reported by the Pentagon in early July, 1974.

<sup>112</sup>"U. S. Shows Force in Indian Ocean," The Christian Science Monitor (July 3, 1974), p. 6.

<sup>113</sup>John W. Finney, "Zumwalt Backs U. S. Plan for Indian Ocean Base," The New York Times (March 21, 1974) p. 16.



U. S. Navy patrol aircraft.<sup>114</sup> Unveiled in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and the Arab oil embargo,<sup>115</sup> the Pentagon's \$29 million plan to expand port, runway, and fuel storage facilities on the island touched off a storm of protest overseas and a lively foreign policy-national security controversy in Washington<sup>116</sup> which continues at this writing.

Led by India's expression of "total opposition,"<sup>117</sup> several littoral governments early in 1974 protested the increased United States naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the plans to develop Diego Garcia to support that presence. Explaining this opposition, India's Foreign Minister Swaran Singh noted that his government "cannot escape the conclusion" that United States plans for Diego Garcia are "connected with a more long-term presence of United States naval forces in the area" which he fears "will start a chain reaction leading to big-power rivalry and military competition"<sup>118</sup> in the Indian Ocean. Other, although

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<sup>114</sup>James S. Keat, "U. S. and Britain to Build Indian Ocean Supply Base," The Sun (February 8, 1974), no page.

<sup>115</sup>Levine, loc. cit.

<sup>116</sup>Michael Getler, "Indian Ocean Base Seen Unaffected," The Washington Post (March 7, 1974), p. A2.

<sup>117</sup>Bernard Weinraub, "U. S. Plan to Set Up Island Base Is Chilling Relations With India," The New York Times (February 8, 1974), p. 61.

<sup>118</sup>"India Criticizes U. S. Move," The New York Times (March 13, 1974), p. 3.



somewhat lesser, protests were voiced by Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kenya, and Singapore.<sup>119</sup> Previous attempts by Third World countries to prevent an anticipated superpower naval race in the Indian Ocean, embodied in three United Nations General Assembly resolutions since 1971 designating the Indian Ocean a "zone of peace" and calling on the superpowers to halt escalation of their military presence there and to keep the ocean free of military bases and nuclear weapons,<sup>120</sup> have been ignored by the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>121</sup>

In Washington, most congressional opposition to the Diego Garcia proposal was reflected in Senator Claiborne Pell's introduction of legislation to delete from a supplementary military appropriations bill the \$29 million requested by the Department of Defense on grounds that expansion of American military involvement in the Indian Ocean "would prove costly, unwise, and contrary to our long range national plans"<sup>122</sup> as well as stimulate, rather than deter, a Soviet naval threat in the area.<sup>123</sup> "From

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<sup>119</sup>Getler, loc. cit.; "Atoll Trouble," Time (April 1, 1974), p. 38.

<sup>120</sup>Charles W. Yost, "A Zone of Peace," The Christian Science Monitor (March 21, 1974), p. 8.

<sup>121</sup>The Christian Science Monitor (March 27, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>122</sup>"Senate Bill Seeks to Halt Build-Up in Indian Ocean," The New York Times (February 27, 1974), p. 15.

<sup>123</sup>Yost, loc. cit.





our experience in Indochina, we know too well the cost of early, easy congressional and State Department acquiescence to Pentagon demands," Senator Pell observed, emphasizing that "we must profit from our past errors" and that Congress' "handling of this authorization request for Diego Garcia offers such an opportunity."<sup>124</sup> In a further effort to prevent "a costly U. S.-Soviet naval race," Senator Pell and Senator Edward M. Kennedy jointly introduced a resolution calling for negotiations between the superpowers on limiting naval facilities and warships in the Indian Ocean.<sup>125</sup> Taking still another tack, Senator Henry M. Jackson proposed to "stop an arms race in the Indian Ocean before it starts" by negotiation of an international agreement to close the Suez Canal to the warships "of all outside powers"--specifically those of the United States and the Soviet Union--before it is reopened.<sup>126</sup> Reflecting some of the Senate's fear of precipitate action, Representative Patricia Schroeder, in an attempt to force discussion of the proposal, introduced legislation in the House of Representatives "to prevent the use of funds for expanding United States air and naval facilities" on Diego Garcia.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Levine, loc. cit.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Heinl in Navy Times (April 10, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>127</sup>"Two Bills Would Block Diego Garcia Project," Navy Times (March 27, 1974), p. 23.



The principal proponents of the plan to expand Diego Garcia into "a modest supply installation designed to support intermittent naval operations in the Indian Ocean"<sup>128</sup> are the Departments of State and Defense. According to the State Department, the Yom Kippur War underscored "the vital necessity" for a United States naval presence in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. Testifying before the Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in March, 1974, Seymour Weiss, Director of State's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, stated that the presence of the U. S. Navy in the Indian Ocean "helped back up" Secretary of State Kissinger's diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East following the October war.<sup>129</sup> Emphasizing the political utility of the U. S. Navy as a "military presence [which can] support effective diplomacy without . . . ever having to be used,"<sup>130</sup> Weiss noted that the protests voiced by Indian Ocean governments against the Diego Garcia project were "far more restrained" than the United States had expected and explained that many of the region's leaders had apparently felt it necessary for "political reasons" to speak out against the move<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>John W. Finney, "Role of Indian Ocean Base is Discussed," The New York Times (March 13, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>129</sup>"Washington's Reaction," The New York Times (March 7, 1974), p. 14.

<sup>130</sup>Levine, loc. cit.

<sup>131</sup>Getler, loc. cit.



while they privately hoped that the United States would proceed as planned to counter Soviet influence.<sup>132</sup> Among the nations Weiss listed as favorable to the Diego Garcia project and an American naval presence in the Indian Ocean were Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, and the People's Republic of China. These countries would be more concerned, he said, if the United States were to let Soviet naval expansion in the area go unchecked.<sup>133</sup>

In testimony before the same subcommittee, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations, depicted the Indian Ocean area as possessing the potential to produce major shifts in the "global power balance" during the next decade. "It follows," he said, "that we must have the ability to influence events in that area, and the capability to deploy our military power in the region is an essential element of such influence." Without a naval support base on Diego Garcia, Admiral Zumwalt pointed out, the U. S. Navy would be "taxed to the absolute limit" to support naval operations in the Indian Ocean. In response to one of the main objections raised in Congress, Admiral Zumwalt observed that expansion of the Diego Garcia facility would not result in a superpower naval race in the Indian Ocean because the Soviet Union was "already on the move" in the region where its expanding naval presence already possesses a shore support system which he described as

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid.; Time (April 1, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>133</sup>Getler, loc. cit.





"substantially more extensive than that of the United States."<sup>134</sup>

If, as Senators Pell and Kennedy have urged. Washington and Moscow were able to negotiate an agreement to limit their naval activities in the Indian Ocean or if, as Senator Jackson suggested, closure by international agreement of the Suez Canal to American and Soviet warships could check Soviet naval expansion in the Indian Ocean, both superpowers might be spared the expense of a naval competition there which may not significantly enhance either nation's security. However, many factors make realization of the Pell-Kennedy approach seem a remote possibility indeed. Not the least of these include the Soviet Navy's demonstrated intention to expand further into the area in its drive to become a "blue water navy" capable of mounting a global presence and reaping the political benefits of showing the flag,<sup>135</sup> the poor track record of Soviet-American conventional and strategic arms limitations negotiations which has included an unsuccessful effort by Washington to follow up on Secretary Brezhnev's 1971 hint of Soviet interest in naval arms limitations talks (see Chapter V, pp. 160-162), and superpower reluctance to agree to any restrictions on their use of the high seas.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Finney in The New York Times (March 21, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>135</sup>Richard Burt, "U. S. Defense Dispute: Indian Ocean Base," The Christian Science Monitor (April 13, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>136</sup>Robert D. Heintz, "Soviets Anger India by Diego Garcia Policy," Navy Times (June 5, 1974), p. 13.





While demilitarization of the Suez Canal would certainly reduce Moscow's ability to reinforce rapidly its naval presence in the Indian Ocean, there is significant reason to doubt that any such agreement could ever be negotiated successfully with a Kremlin for which reopening the canal has been and remains an overriding strategic objective.<sup>137</sup>

In sum, Moscow apparently intends continued application of its expanding naval power in the Indian Ocean to gain political influence throughout the area. While a few Soviet gains in weak littoral countries may not make a significant difference to United States interests, at some point cumulative Soviet gains could become consequential.<sup>138</sup> Because sound foreign policy is made neither on the basis of "worst case" considerations of interest to military contingency planners nor on the basis of the fond hopes of some members of Congress but on the basis of that which is most likely to occur,<sup>139</sup> the United States would appear to have no practical alternative to the development of a policy response to the Soviet naval challenge in the Indian Ocean which includes a naval presence capable of securing American interests in the Middle East and elsewhere in the area without risking undue alienation of the littoral nations. Certainly, Senator Pell's concern that increased American

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<sup>137</sup>Heinl, op. cit., pp. 13, 49.

<sup>138</sup>Wriggins, op. cit., p. 368.

<sup>139</sup>Griffiths, op. cit., p. 4.



involvement in the Indian Ocean would "stimulate" a Soviet naval threat in the area appears unfounded in light of both the present magnitude of the Soviet naval presence there and Moscow's long-standing determination to develop that presence in support of its interests in the area regardless of whatever action Washington takes. A credible U. S. Navy presence, symbolic of the strength of American resolve, may, however, deter Soviet moves inimical to American interests in the region.

Howard Wriggins of Columbia University, a scholar who has urged American naval restraint in the Indian Ocean, has observed that:<sup>140</sup>

. . . if there can be no agreement between the super-powers to leave the Indian Ocean virtually free of their naval vessels, the next best thing would be for there to be at least two competing, relatively low-level, naval presences. The worst of all for the littoral states and the United States would be for the USSR to have a sole dominant position. If there were more than one naval presence, each would be constrained by the presence of the other from ill-considered political action.

In terms of the political application of naval force, deployment of a United States naval presence in the Indian Ocean and development of Diego Garcia to support it would signal Moscow that, while Washington remains committed to detente, the United States will not allow the Soviet Union to use a period of relaxed tensions to acquire a position of unchallenged naval superiority<sup>141</sup> which could be exploited

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<sup>140</sup>Wriggins, loc. cit.

<sup>141</sup>Burt, loc. cit.



to make political gains. A decision by Washington to do otherwise--not to respond resolutely to the growing Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean--could, and probably would, be perceived by the Kremlin and others as evidence of American acquiescence to a marked change in the distribution of power there which could cause them to misjudge the value of the American deterrent to Soviet involvement in the Middle East and elsewhere.<sup>142</sup>

An appropriate and politically effective policy response to the growing presence of the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean would not, however, be one which matched Moscow's naval presence there ship for ship or raced to overwhelm that presence numerically. Indeed, such a massive U. S. Navy presence could cast the United States in the role of the threatening power--"the precipitator of super-power competition in the Indian Ocean"<sup>143</sup>--rather than that of the protecting power, to the detriment of American interests. To be as effective as possible in the essentially political role of representing American power and interest and dissuading easy and consequential intervention, therefore, the United States naval presence in the Indian Ocean should quietly but visibly demonstrate a modern naval capability.<sup>144</sup> While the force deployed to maintain this presence should not be large in numbers, it should be, and

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<sup>142</sup>Wriggins, op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., pp. 368-369.





should be perceived as, the most up-to-date and effective force possible in order to evoke the suasion effects essential to the successful pursuit of American policy. In time of crisis, such a force could be readily and visibly augmented as necessary to the successful exercise of naval suasion without undue strain on limited naval resources.<sup>145</sup> Establishment on Diego Garcia of a genuinely modest facility to support such operations in the Indian Ocean, while subject to propagandistic exploitation, could hardly be considered the "crucial lap" of a naval race in the region which it has been termed by one Western commentator<sup>146</sup> when compared with the advances in the region of a Soviet Navy which has obviously overcome its ideological barrier .

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<sup>145</sup>This is essentially the view of the U. S. Navy. As recent former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1972 in response to a question posed by Senator Peter H. Dominick as to whether or not the Navy considered it essential that the United States "maintain equal or superior naval forces in the Indian Ocean:"

. . . we must maintain a presence in the Indian Ocean and be ready to reinforce it when required . . . . I don't think that it is mandatory that our presence there always be at all times superior to the Soviet force provided we have the capability to make it superior when needed. But I think a permanent presence is mandatory.

(U. S. Congress, Senate, Fiscal Year 1973 Authorization for Military Procurement, Research and Development, Construction Authorization for the Safeguard ABM, and Active Duty and Selected Reserve Strengths--Part 2, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 981.

<sup>146</sup>Zorza, loc. cit.



against foreign bases as the use of naval power as an instrument of foreign policy has become increasingly acceptable and important to the leadership in the Kremlin.<sup>147</sup>

Moreover, the limited nature of such a facility compared with Moscow's shore infrastructure could communicate the contrast between American restraint and Soviet ambition. It is likely that, as increasing numbers of littoral regimes become fearful of Soviet intrusion into their affairs following the reopening of the Suez Canal, the American presence in the Indian Ocean will be increasingly welcome and popular.<sup>148</sup> That India, while continuing to make its opposition clear, has "refrained from using strident tones"<sup>149</sup> in doing so, may be indicative of a trend favoring a counter-veiling American presence apparently discernible in other nation's attitudes.<sup>150</sup>

Other objectives of American foreign policy in the Middle East could be served by the development of a support base on Diego Garcia. That of ensuring the continued existence of the State of Israel is one of these. In the very real eventuality of another Arab-Israeli war,<sup>151</sup> the

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<sup>147</sup>Mackintosh in McCWire, loc. cit.

<sup>148</sup>Wriggins, op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>149</sup>Henry S. Haywood, "U. S., India Rebuild Rapport," The Christian Science Monitor (August 2, 1974), p. 5.

<sup>150</sup>Getler, loc. cit.

<sup>151</sup>"A Critic's View of U. S.-Arab Relations," The Christian Science Monitor (June 25, 1974), p. 4; Jason



ability to maintain supplies on the island would eliminate the necessity of obtaining the permission of other nations to fly over their territories to effect an emergency airlift to resupply Israel as it did during the Yom Kippur War when such permission was refused by some of the United States' allies.<sup>152</sup>

Another interest--"defense of the sea lanes"--which derives from the dependence of nations friendly to the United States on the safe transit through the Indian Ocean of Persian Gulf oil vital to their economies is often invoked to gain support for American naval expansion in the Indian Ocean. This, however, would seem an invalid justification for the response advocated herein. While Japanese, Europeans, and Australians do indeed depend upon Indian Ocean sea lanes,<sup>153</sup> severe anxiety over the possibility of

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Morris, "Israel Begins to Talk of a Return to War," The Christian Science Monitor (August 5, 1974), p. 3; John K. Cooley, "Soviets See New Peril in Mideast," The Christian Science Monitor (August 13, 1974), pp. 1, 6; "Soviets, Syrians Brace for More Mideast Fighting," The Christian Science Monitor (August 14, 1974), p. 6; John K. Cooley, "Mideast Hostilities Simmer," The Christian Science Monitor (August 23, 1974), p. 1; "Syrian Hawks Pushing for New Mideast War," Rocky Mountain News (August 31, 1974), p. 41; Henry J. Taylor, "An Ominous Threat of Future Bloodshed in the Middle East," Rocky Mountain News (August 31, 1974), p. 49.

<sup>152</sup>Keat, loc. cit.

<sup>153</sup>Wriggins, op. cit., pp. 369-370. Middle Eastern oil shipped via Indian Ocean sea lanes is especially vital to the economic survival of Japan, which depends upon oil for 75 percent of her energy needs (Central Intelligence Agency, op. cit., p. 22) and imported 85 percent of her total oil imports in 1971-72 from the Persian Gulf (Ibid., p. 23), a percentage which continues to increase.





Soviet interference with this shipping appears unfounded. It is highly improbable that the Soviet Navy would harass or attack Western shipping in the Indian Ocean or anywhere else. Such a hostile act--an act of war--could trigger the war between the superpowers<sup>154</sup> which it is in the vital interests of both to prevent. Geoffrey Jukes, an Australian analyst, has written:<sup>155</sup>

It is difficult to envisage a situation, short of world nuclear war, in which the Soviet government would be prepared to place the bulk of its merchant fleet at risk by engaging to 'interfere' with Western shipping in the Indian or any other ocean.

Although the House of Representatives voted by a wide margin to allow expansion of facilities on Diego Garcia as requested by the Department of Defense,<sup>156</sup> the Senate Armed Services Committee deferred action "until later in 1974" on the controversial request.<sup>157</sup> Despite the debate in Washington and expressed opposition of several governments in the Indian Ocean region, it appears at this writing that Congress will grant the funds for the project.<sup>158</sup> When it does, the United States should move prudently in the Indian

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<sup>154</sup>Levine, loc. cit.

<sup>155</sup>Geoffrey Jukes, "The Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean," Survival, Vol. XIII, No. 11 (November 1971), p. 374.

<sup>156</sup>The Christian Science Monitor (May 1, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>157</sup>Finney in The New York Times (April 4, 1974), loc. cit.

<sup>158</sup>Finney in The New York Times (March 21, 1974), loc. cit.





Ocean to ensure that this response to the Soviet naval presence there remains an appropriate and effective political application of naval force which will elicit at least a modicum of regional approval without inviting unwarranted blame for violating the "zone of peace."



## CHAPTER V

### THE SUPERPOWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

#### NAVIES AND FOREIGN POLICIES IN THE FUTURE

In recent years, it has been shown, the expanding Soviet Navy clearly has seized the initiative in the political application of naval force in the waters of the Middle East--an initiative for which the United States pursues appropriate responses. While the Kremlin's intentions regarding continued application of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of its foreign policy in the region are not the sole or even the dominant factor involved in decisions concerning American foreign policy in the Middle East, estimates of those intentions will continue to play an important role in the development and deployment of a U. S. Navy force structure capable of successful implementation of that policy. Thus, the future political roles of superpower navies in the Middle East will be, to a great extent, a function of the way in which the Soviet Navy is employed as a policy tool.

#### SOVIET VIEWS OF THE SOVIET NAVY

#### AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY

The future of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East will depend primarily upon



Moscow's future perceptions of its value and best use as such within the evolving political environment of the region. A variety of ideas on this subject appear to be held by members of the Kremlin leadership.

Appreciation of the Soviet Navy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy. That many in the Soviet leadership perceive the

value and favor the use of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy is apparent not only from its intensified employment as such from 1967 through the present but also

from a series of eleven articles entitled "Navies in War and Peace" written by Admiral Gorshkov which appeared in

Morskoj Sbornik, the navy's monthly journal, from 1972 into

1973.<sup>1</sup> The entire tone of this series reflects Gorshkov's

understanding of the Soviet Navy as an active instrument

of the "state interests" of the USSR<sup>2</sup> which, according to

Herrick, include the primary foreign policy objectives of

"enhancing the USSR's global influence and international

prestige . . . by maintaining a world-wide naval presence"

and "conducting shows-of-force and low-risk use of limited

naval force to support client and 'progressive' states . . .

against imperialist aggression"<sup>3</sup> as well as providing for

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde A. Smith, "The Meaning and Significance of the Gorshkov Articles," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 5 (March-April 1974), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Michael McGwire, The Gorshkov Series--"Navies in War and Peace": A Preliminary Analysis, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, May 1973, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Navy Commander-in-Chief Advocates Construction of a Much Larger Navy, Arlington, Center for Naval Analyses, May 1973, p. 48.





the strategic defense of the homeland.

Asserting that military power is the sine qua non of world politics, Gorshkov observes that naval strength has always been an essential attribute of great power status. Russia, he notes, has always suffered when she neglected her navy; the Soviet Union needs a powerful navy to maintain its status as a superpower in a world in which the relevance and importance of navies to the achievement of political objectives is on the increase. Emphasizing the inherent attributes of naval forces for the pursuit and defense of a nation's interests beyond its borders, Gorshkov details the unique capacity of naval forces to demonstrate a nation's economic and military might and to project military power in peacetime.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the series, Gorshkov advocates the continued application of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy.<sup>5</sup>

However, the mere fact that Gorshkov published this series of articles suggests that his view of the Soviet Navy as a valuable foreign policy instrument may not be a unanimous one in the Kremlin.

Criticism of the Soviet Navy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy. Recent high-level disillusionment over poor returns from Moscow's investments in the Middle East apparently extends to the question of whether or not the benefits of

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<sup>4</sup>McCWire, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Herrick, op. cit., p. 5.



forward deployment outweigh the political and economic costs of the effort.<sup>6</sup> While Gorshkov has been advocating a larger navy and its continued application as an instrument of foreign policy, certain factions within the Defense Ministry and the consumer-oriented Politburo appear to be questioning its effectiveness as such and the increasingly widespread deployment of the Soviet Navy in the Middle East may be under attack from these quarters.<sup>7</sup> Although precise information on this criticism--much of which certainly arises also out of the factional competition for the allocation of resources--is not available, the probable perceptions giving rise to it are a matter for productive speculation.

Conceding that the Soviet naval presence in the Middle East may convey "the impression of rising power" to some advantage to the USSR and to certain disadvantage to the West, these critics almost certainly question the ultimate effectiveness of this presence as a means of increasing Moscow's influence in the region to the point of suggesting its counterproductivity and its danger to Soviet objectives. Apparently aware of the potential damage to their political image which the Soviet Navy carries with it, these critics perceive the likelihood that its presence casts doubt in Arab minds about the USSR's role as "a disinterested

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<sup>6</sup>McCWire, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Herrick, op. cit., p. 44.



benevolent onlooker" and that it retains "old-fashioned imperialistic overtones" repugnant to these peoples.<sup>8</sup> Like any other market, they no doubt would contend, the diplomatic one for such activities as good-will port visits and showing the flag can be saturated to the point of producing swiftly diminishing returns or even a negative reaction.<sup>9</sup> They would certainly agree with Martin that any demonstration of naval power is a demonstration of the capacity to enjoy access to the shores of others and that the newer nations which have only recently gained independence from a Western domination based on maritime strength --a category that includes most of the Middle East--may well see an implied menace in even the most amiable visit.<sup>10</sup> Sensitive to today's more inhibited attitudes toward the casual use of force, they question the value of a naval presence.<sup>11</sup>

At least some events in the early 1970s which appear to militate against Gorshkov's concept of naval power as an effective instrument of Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East may have served to reinforce this disillusionment and criticism. The Jordanian crisis of 1970 demonstrated that, as described in Chapter IV, although the

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<sup>8</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., pp. 335-336.

<sup>9</sup>McConnell, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>11</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy--Prospects for the Seventies," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 422.



Soviet naval presence in the Middle East has restricted the range of options open to United States policy makers, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron has not neutralized the Sixth Fleet in all circumstances.<sup>12</sup> While the Jordanian crisis thus served to diminish the credibility of the Soviet naval presence in some eyes, Moscow's attempts to strengthen its ties with Syria and Iraq in order to recoup its 1972 losses in Egypt<sup>13</sup> probably increased the Soviet Navy's status as a political liability among its critics who may view continued involvement on that level with politically volatile clients as detrimental to Soviet foreign policy objectives in the region. Alternatively, if the expulsion from Egypt had the effect of enhancing the argument within the Soviet Navy for the construction of aircraft carriers,<sup>14</sup> such a diversion of resources certainly would not find favor among these critics.

Additional developments reinforcing these critical perceptions and positions probably include budgetary evidence that the Soviet Navy's high visibility level has strengthened the hand of American advocates of a larger U. S. Navy and a "blue-water" foreign policy for the United States over those favoring reduced commitments in the wake of the Vietnam War and the increasingly negative reaction

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<sup>12</sup>Smolansky, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>13</sup>Smolansky in Current History (January 1973), loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup>Smolansky in McGwire, op. cit., p. 344.





among non-aligned countries in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean regions to the introduction of superpower naval forces into these areas.<sup>15</sup>

# ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR THE SOVIET NAVY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Western views concerning the possible future of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East appear to vary at least as much as do Soviet perceptions of its utility as such.

Possible Future I: "A Bargaining Chip." Some analysts have long suspected that the ultimate foreign policy objective of Soviet naval deployments in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean is to establish a bargaining position from which to negotiate mutual limitations of superpower naval deployments<sup>16</sup>--perhaps the supreme exercise in naval suasion.

In spite of its increased involvement with the Arab states and its increased use of the Soviet Navy for political purposes in the region, Moscow does not seem to have lost sight of its original reason for forward deployment of naval forces in the waters of the Middle East--the threat to the USSR's industrial heartland of nuclear strikes launched from U. S. Navy units in the eastern Mediterranean

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<sup>15</sup>Michael McGwire, The Gorshkov Series--"Navies in War and Peace": A Preliminary Analysis, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup>McConnell, op. cit., p. 14.



and, more recently, in the Indian Ocean. As of this writing, the threat still exists, and to counter it remains the priority task of the Soviet Navy.<sup>17</sup>

Implicit in the Kremlin's apparent interest in such limitations is its realization that the Soviet Navy almost certainly could not accomplish this first priority task. In 1968, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron was seen as inadequate and ineffective as a strategic defense force. According to Herrick:<sup>18</sup>

Except by a wholly unexpected attack, the USSR could not realistically entertain much hope of their missile destroyers or submarines successfully attacking the Sixth Fleet aircraft carriers, let alone the Polaris submarines, and, in any event, not before the latter were able to launch their initial retaliatory strike against the Soviet Union.

By the early 1970s, technological advances and new construction notwithstanding, although the Soviet Navy could expect to have some success against aircraft carriers in the event of a war, its capabilities vis-a-vis the threat of the West's strategic submarine force remained extremely limited.<sup>19</sup>

Given this situation, some in Moscow may believe that more could be gained by effecting a removal of the Western naval presence at the price of its own presence, if possible, than by maintaining the present naval competition

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<sup>17</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Policy--Prospects for the Seventies," in McGwire, op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>18</sup>Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy, p. 139.

<sup>19</sup>Elechman in McGwire, op. cit., p. 440.



with its associated risks and costs.<sup>20</sup> Although Soviet proposals for limitations on naval deployments in the waters of the Middle East are not new--such initiatives may be traced at least as far back as the Soviet "Draft Declaration of Non-Intervention in the Middle East" presented to the United Nations in February, 1957, and have been repeated fairly regularly ever since<sup>21</sup>--this is a type of bargaining that appears to be possible only under conditions of strategic parity<sup>22</sup> and possession of adequate naval "bargaining chips"<sup>23</sup> which the Soviets only recently achieved. More recent Soviet proposals with respect to this matter, therefore, have compelled greater attention because they have been seen as perhaps less propagandistic and more serious in nature. On June 11, 1971, Secretary Brezhnev may have reflected this Soviet perception when, in a sweeping foreign policy statement, he offered to negotiate a mutual limitation of naval forces with the United States:<sup>24</sup>

We have never considered, and do not now consider, that it is an ideal situation when the navies

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<sup>20</sup>McCWire, loc. cit.; Blechman, loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Blechman, loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup>McConnell, loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup>Blechman, op. cit., p. 449.

<sup>24</sup>Dusko Doder, "Brezhnev Asks Talk on Navies: Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Limits Urged, The Washington Post (June 12, 1971), no page number; Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report (June 14, 1971), p. J-IV.





of the great powers are cruising about for long periods of time far from their own shores, and we are prepared to solve this problem, but to solve it, as they say, on an equal basis. On the basis of such principles, the Soviet Union is ready to discuss any proposals.

Specifically mentioned as regimes of interest in Brezhnev's statement were the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean<sup>25</sup> as potential "seas of peace."<sup>26</sup>

If the Soviet Union were able, at some time in the future, to negotiate such a bilateral agreement on limitations in, or even elimination of, superpower naval deployments in the Mediterranean Sea, the Soviet Navy would have achieved much more effectively and economically through disengagement the primary objective of Moscow's policy in the Middle East which it could not achieve through forward deployment--the negation of the threat posed by the West's sea-based strategic strike forces.<sup>27</sup> The most recent evidence of Moscow's continued interest in this approach to strategic defense was Secretary Brezhnev's mid-1974 announcement in Poland to the effect that the USSR was ready to sign an agreement with the United States on the withdrawal from the Mediterranean of all nuclear weapons deployed there in Soviet and American surface ships and

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<sup>25</sup>U. S. Congress, House, The Indian Ocean: Political and Strategic Future, p. 190.

<sup>26</sup>Bernard Gwertzman, "Peace and Consumer Gain Stressed at Soviet Parley," The New York Times (March 31, 1971), p. 30.

<sup>27</sup>Blechman, op. cit., p. 439.



submarines<sup>28</sup>--an arrangement which would eliminate the Western sea-based strategic deterrent from the area without significantly weakening the Soviet naval position and its political potential. Although the particular conditions of any such agreement would dictate the degree of advantage, the Kremlin would certainly expect to accrue additional advantages within the Middle East. For example, certain to be among those resulting from an agreement for mutual withdrawal would be the removal of the political influence of the Sixth Fleet from the region<sup>29</sup> upon which the Soviets could capitalize to improve their relations with the Arab states. Soviet spokesmen would, no doubt, claim that the removal of the Sixth Fleet, long viewed as a threat to Arab nationalism and a primary support for Israel, resulted from the resolute actions of the USSR and American fear of the might of the Soviet Navy.<sup>30</sup> Having eliminated the United States naval presence by agreement, the Kremlin might view the purely political competition in the Middle East as manageable or favorable to their interests, even without the presence of the Soviet Navy.

Although mutual benefits, not the least of which would be a decreased chance of superpower confrontation in the

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<sup>28</sup>Paul Wohl, "Soviets Deny Their Navy Has Aggressive Potential," The Christian Science Monitor (August 14, 1974), p. 3E.

<sup>29</sup>McCWire, op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>30</sup>Blechman, op. cit., pp. 450-451.



Middle East, almost certainly would accrue to both super-powers as a result of mutual naval arms limitations--depending, of course, upon the particulars of the negotiated regime--a more probable future for the Soviet Navy appears to be one of continued presence and application as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East.

Possible Future II: Continued Application. Most current indicators point away from the possible use of the Soviet Navy as a "bargaining chip" in naval arms limitations negotiations and toward a more probable future of continued and perhaps increased use as an active instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East. In addition to Moscow's continued interest and involvement in the region despite its recent setbacks and Washington's apparent inability to elicit a positive response to Brezhnev's offer for naval arms limitations talks,<sup>31</sup> foremost among these indicators are the current superpower "naval race" in the waters of the Middle East which is expected to intensify with the reopening of the Suez Canal, the Soviet Navy's vested interest in the Middle Eastern policy which has powered much of its recent growth, the apparent increased influence of the Soviet military over the Kremlin's policy-making process<sup>32</sup> which was most recently significantly evidenced

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<sup>31</sup>U. S. Congress, House, loc. cit.

<sup>32</sup>U. S. Congress, House, Soviet Involvement in the Middle East and the Western Response, pp. 70-71, 89.





by Defense Minister Marshal Andrei Grechko's elevation to full membership in the Politburo during the Yom Kippur War,<sup>33</sup> and some recent interpretations of Admiral Gorshkov's series of articles as announcements of policy decisions.

A preview of this more probable future was provided by Moscow's employment of its naval forces in the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pakistani War of December, 1971, when the Soviet Navy deployed a record force of 26 combatants and auxiliaries as a political counterpresence to an American carrier task force of ten combatants and four auxiliaries inserted from the Gulf of Tonkin<sup>34</sup> "to insure the protection of U. S. interests in the area." Although the exact aims of these superpower deployments remain uncertain, it is apparent that the likely target of U. S. Navy "influence" was India.<sup>35</sup> As an exercise in active naval suasion, the American naval presence was designed to deter India. Washington's primary objective was almost certainly to assure the continued existence of Pakistan; Islamabad seemed to lie at the mercy of a Soviet client, India, once East Pakistan had been reduced. Because Soviet fortunes in the Indian Ocean--and, therefore, in those

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<sup>33</sup>Paul Wohl, "Soviet Military Men Slow Detente," The Christian Science Monitor (April 5, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>U. S. Congress, House, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1973, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1972. pp. 119. 478.

<sup>35</sup>McConnell and Kelly, op. cit., pp. 3-4.





areas of the Middle East accessible from that body of water--were dependent to no little extent on the fortunes of its client, the Soviet Navy deployed in response to the presence of the U. S. Navy task force to defend and perhaps to enhance its credibility with the Indian government.

This crisis not only revealed the high value placed by Moscow on the application of limited naval force for essentially political purposes but also suggested the emergence of a set of objective norms or "rules of the game" to govern the future of Soviet and American naval intervention in defense of their minimum interests without unacceptable risks of superpower confrontation.<sup>36</sup> Essentially, under these uncoded "rules" as they are described by James M. McConnell and Anne M. Kelly of the Center for Naval Analyses, each superpower patron:<sup>37</sup>

retains both the "right" of intervention and the "right" of deterring intervention, but these rights are in practice subject to limitations of context.

. . . it appears permissible for one superpower to support a friend against the client of another superpower as long as the friend is on the defensive strategically; the object must be to avert decisive defeat and restore the balance, not to assist the client to victory. The issue of who began the war is not central; it is the strategic situation of the client at the time of the contemplated intervention that counts. The tactical character of the intervention is also not central; it can be offensive or defensive, depending upon the requirements of the situation.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.



Moreover, these "rules" emphasize the value of the interest at stake.<sup>38</sup>

Eastern Europe, for example, is more important to Soviet than to American security; hence the Russian [interest] is stronger there. The Third World, however, is an intermediate area between the Blocs, where superpower interests are relatively equal and, moreover, generally not vital.

Finally, the "fact of possession" appears to be a decisive factor.<sup>39</sup>

A patron whose client is in recognized possession of a value has [a] greater [interest] than the patron of a would-be conqueror. In each case of conflict between clients . . . defensive interventions are reluctantly allowed, offensive interventions discouraged.

Given this "rules of the game" perspective, it would appear to be offensive actions on the order of the Suez War of 1956, not defensive, limited interventions like that of the United States on behalf of Lebanon in 1958, which will be ruled out in the future.<sup>40</sup> As far as the Indo-Pakistani War is concerned:<sup>41</sup>

The Russians would probably have been aware that the circumstances of the . . . conflict were almost tailor-made for uncontested U. S. intervention under these "rules" and that Washington was not obliged to recognize the credibility of the Russian deterrent. Under this interpretation, the Russian presence would be designed to remind the President of the seriousness of the situation, to force him to think through the grounds of intervention and make sure

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



that real interests, and not just luxuries, were at stake . . . to enforce the "rules of the game," i.e., restrict the scope of the U. S. intervention and confine it to defensive ends. If the opposing super-power does not deploy a credible deterrent and thereby demonstrate an interest, the "rules" are relaxed and only the ordinary political, moral and local military constraints are operative. No policeman, no law.

Although foreign policy intentions cannot be discerned through analysis of military capabilities alone, the Soviet Navy's increasing capability to project its sea power ashore suggests an appreciation in Moscow of its potential for defensive intervention in the Middle East within the "rules" framework described above. Should the opportunity arise, the Soviet Navy very likely could be expected to mount a small-scale unopposed or lightly-opposed amphibious landing of naval infantry forces in support of an established pro-Soviet regime or, possibly, in support of a coup d'etat<sup>42</sup> in pursuit of foreign policy objectives with an approximate knowledge of the consequences of such an operation. The "rules," therefore, would serve to increase the applicability of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of an active foreign policy in the Middle East. That the "rules of the game" regime in this more probable future of political application of Soviet naval force will require an American naval presence capable of evoking the suasion effects that will make it operative is obvious.

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<sup>42</sup>Becker and Horelick, op. cit., p. 61.





Recent events, which have shown the Soviet Navy to be increasingly activist and adventuresome in its pursuit of Moscow's foreign policy in the Middle East even to the extent of violating the "rules" outside the context of super-power naval interaction<sup>43</sup> further underscore the need for an effective American naval presence in the region. The transportation of Moroccan troops to Syria just prior to the Yom Kippur War<sup>44</sup> and participation in the Egyptian Navy's blockade of the Red Sea during that war<sup>45</sup> are two examples of Soviet Navy actions which represent attempts to upset, rather than restore or maintain, the status quo between the USSR and another sovereign state<sup>46</sup> supported by a Western patron.

At this writing, it is apparent that Washington intends to maintain a naval presence oriented toward countering the political challenge posed by the Soviet Navy in the Middle East. President Gerald R. Ford has stated that, in the face of Moscow's expanding naval power in the Middle East, the United States must "maintain a task force of sufficient size in the Med to be a deterrent" and "actively explore the desirability of having an Indian Ocean Fleet."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Whetten and Johnson, loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup>Kelly, loc. cit.

<sup>47</sup>"Ford Voices Views on Defense Matters," Navy Times (August 28, 1974), p. 27.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The present study was undertaken as an attempt to develop an increased insight into the employment of super-power naval forces as instruments of foreign policy in the Middle East through an examination of some of the recent past, present, and possible future political applications of Soviet naval power in the region and some of their impact on and implications for pertinent aspects of American foreign policy toward the region. In pursuit of this objective, Edward Luttwak's concept of armed naval suasion, an explanation of the political application of naval force as it seems to influence national actors in international arena situations short of war, was adapted and applied as a conceptual framework which facilitated a focus upon available empirical data to demonstrate the evolution of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East and to ascertain appropriate and effective American policy responses to the challenge which that navy as such presents to United States interests in the region.

Following elucidation of the conceptual framework in Chapter I and articulation in Chapter II of a substantive--geographical, historical, and political--perspective on the



Middle Eastern environment in which it is applied, two basic conclusions were developed in the balance of the study.

The first of these two basic conclusions is that the Soviet Navy, during the course of the past several years, has evolved from an essentially defensive military force of questionable effectiveness into an increasingly important and demonstrably effective instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East which poses a serious--although sometimes overstated and misunderstood--challenge to the successful pursuit of American foreign policy in the region.

Originally deployed forward in the waters of the region to defend the Soviet homeland against Western strategic attack from the sea, the Soviet Navy began to be applied as an active instrument of foreign policy in the Middle East only after its potential as such was dramatically displayed for Kremlin eyes during the summer of 1967 when the timely exercise of naval suasion on behalf of its defeated and disillusioned client, Egypt, garnered a triumph of sorts from the almost certain political tragedy of the Six Day War to enhance Moscow's political influence and strategic position in the region. Moscow's subsequent exercise of naval suasion and countersuasion in support of clients and potential clients and in constraint of the American naval presence throughout the Middle East, combined with Soviet propaganda and Western alarm, have



established the Soviet Navy as the political force in the region which it is perceived to be and utilized as today.

Although its political effect is often subtle and intangible, the Soviet Navy--in company, of course, with other policy instruments such as trade and economic and military aid--has made important and unique contributions to Moscow's interests in the region. The growing perception of the Soviet Navy's ascendancy in the waters of the Middle East, a perception engendered by its increased presence and numerous demonstrations of its political utility, appears to have so enhanced the Kremlin's own view of its position and potential in the region that the primary mission of its navy there may be changing from one of strategic defense of the homeland to one of active exercise of naval suasion on behalf of Soviet foreign policy. Because of Moscow's vital extraregional defensive interests in regions like the Middle East as well as other interests in such regions, the Soviet Union as a superpower would seem to have very few, if any, real alternatives to Weitpolitik--the pursuit of its "state interests" throughout the world. As a consequence, the future role of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy would seem assured. Certainly, today, the pursuit of these interests with naval assistance provides a primary outlet for an active Soviet foreign policy as well as a primary challenge to American foreign policy in the Middle East.





The second basic conclusion is that the political challenge posed by the Soviet Navy to American interests in the Middle East must be met through an array of responses including the judicious political application of naval force by the U. S. Navy in the waters of the Middle East if the United States is to continue to function successfully within the region's complex political environment.

Application of the conceptual framework to general policy alternatives which fall between the simplistic extremes of unilateral American naval disengagement which would "deliver the region to the USSR," on the one hand, and participation in a ship-for-ship naval race with the Soviet Union to maintain a so-called naval "balance of power," on the other, facilitated identification of both appropriate and inappropriate naval responses to the Soviet naval challenge in the Middle East.

A proposed policy of surrogation which would augment American military capabilities throughout the Middle East with indigeneous forces--to the extent of substantial substitution of regional naval forces for the presence of U. S. Navy units--was determined an inappropriate response. Not only is there a demonstrable lack of dependable potential surrogates within the region with which to implement such a policy but, more important insofar as the political application of naval force is concerned, no surrogate could symbolize the concern and represent the power of the United States in such a way as to evoke the suasion effects which



could be evoked and achieve the results which could be achieved by the credible presence of the U. S. Navy.

In the eastern Mediterranean, retention and revitalization of a modified U. S. Sixth Fleet--primarily a political force since its inception--as a symbol of American power and interest in the Middle East and as a constraint on Soviet designs therein was confirmed as a response essential to American foreign policy in the region. Although its military power and political influence have suffered somewhat in the last few years, partially as a consequence of the increased presence of the Soviet Navy, the Sixth Fleet's success at exercising naval suasion in recent regional crises has proved its continuing value there. A recent suggestion that a smaller Sixth Fleet force structure retaining sufficient visibility and viability to be perceived as a credible force could conceivably evoke the same suasion effects as those evoked by the present force structure was found to merit pursuit.

East of Suez, where an already substantial Soviet naval presence is expected to expand following the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1975, elimination of the U. S. Middle East Force stationed in the Persian Gulf and development of a credible intermittent American naval presence in the Indian Ocean supported by a modest facility to be developed on Diego Garcia were shown to be appropriate to the pursuit of American interests. Continuation of the small Middle East Force was determined to be detrimental



to the United States position in this increasingly important part of the region where recent unfavorable comparisons of its obsolete and unimpressive U. S. Navy units with markedly superior modern Soviet warships could evoke erroneous perceptions of decreasing American concern and where its continued stationing could imply unintended commitments to the defense of the Persian Gulf. Any risk of communicating "a diminution of American interest" in the Persian Gulf through withdrawal of this force could be more than compensated for by a new approach providing for periodic visits by credible naval forces truly representative of American naval and national power: a carrier task force or other impressive detachment of U. S. Navy combatants and auxiliaries routinely deployed on an intermittent basis in the Indian Ocean. At the same time that this presence and its modest support facility at Diego Garcia could be compared with the seemingly permanent Soviet naval presence and its more extensive littoral support infrastructure to contrast American restraint and Soviet ambition, it could signal both Moscow and the Middle Eastern capitals that Washington will not permit Soviet exploitation of detente to achieve unchallenged naval superiority and political gains in the region which would follow therefrom. In times of crisis, this presence could be utilized in the traditional role of supporting American diplomatic initiatives--a role long played by the Sixth Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean.





As is evidenced by the numerous references to Luttwak's construct in these conclusions, it is indeed doubtful that the present study could have succeeded to the extent that it has in transcending mere descriptive narrative to determine the essence of the Soviet Navy's political challenge in the Middle East or to identify what appear to be appropriate American naval responses to that challenge without benefit of the concept of the political application of naval force introduced in Chapter I and applied throughout. By defining and classifying the ways in which a navy's political effects are generated within the dynamic environment of international politics and by providing insight into the probable consequences of those effects, this conceptual framework bestowed direction and purposiveness on thought which otherwise could have meandered indefinitely and unproductively, unable to approach and process available empirical data in such a way as to arrive at meaningful conclusions. In the most fundamental way, both the effectiveness and the essentiality of the conceptual framework in and to the present study are attested to by the fact that its application has produced conclusions concerning the evolution and present status of the Soviet Navy as an instrument of foreign policy and such aspects of the American response thereto as the present political utility and future force structure of the U. S. Sixth Fleet, the retention of the Middle East Force, and the development of the U. S. Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean which are



not completely commensurate with, and sometimes directly contrary to, the writer's former opinions on these issues--opinions which may have prevailed without access to this orienting device and analytical tool.

To emphasize the utility of the conceptual framework to realization of the objectives of the present study is not to allege its perfection. Indeed, that any such framework ". . . imposed on the fluid and variegated world of politics . . ." is necessarily limited in its precision and stability was recognized at the outset. Certainly among its limitations are those inherent in any construct dealing with something as intangible as others' perceptions. Refinement of the present framework through incorporation of whatever may be learned as a result of extensive empirical research about the perceptual and reactional propensities of potential Middle Eastern target polities vis-a-vis naval stimuli could lessen the effects of this limitation to render the construct a more viable and reliable one for relation by planners to specific political applications of naval force in specific contingencies in order to maximize the political utility of naval power. Another limitation involves the physical inability of any such framework to encompass and focus on the many other factors extant in the Middle Eastern political environment which may impinge upon successful political application of naval force. This limitation is one which, in many circumstances, would properly relegate the results of any study based upon its use



to the status of those of a component study contributing to a systematic analysis of major policy, or even operational, alternatives. In short, the conceptual framework is no panacea. However, as applied herein to develop general conclusions concerning the evolution and status of the other superpower's naval challenge to American foreign policy in the Middle East and the appropriateness and effectiveness of broad policy alternatives as responses to that challenge, it appears to have served its purpose well.

Although admittedly not perfect, the concept of the political application of naval force has proved a useful tool in the preparation of the present study and, in a very practical sense, appears representative of the type approach which, when refined and applied to analyses by those charged with shaping American foreign policy to the best intelligence for decision-making available, should contribute to the development of policies which will promote the emergence of a world order as favorable as possible to American interests and the cause of peace.



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## APPENDIX



## THE POLITICAL APPLICATION OF NAVAL FORCE:

## SUASION INPUTS AND OUTPUTS\*

The Inputs of Naval Suasion      The Outputs of Naval Suasion

## A. Force-Level Changes

## Reinforcements:

1. To augment the intensity of coercive or supportive suasion.
2. To "show concern" where no specific goals obtain.
3. To pre-empt superpower suasion that a local client may invoke against the deploying party or his client.

## Reductions:

1. To signal disengagement.
2. To discourage the unwanted activism of a local client.
3. To close combat options in order to facilitate resistance to pressures for their use on own or client's behalf, including domestic pressures.

## B. Display Manipulations

a. Fleet movements and maneuvers in adversary's and/or client's presumed zone of observation:

1. To evoke coercive or supportive effects in general where no direct relationship to any enemy threats obtains.
2. To show concern in general where no specific goals or client affiliations obtain, i.e., in a crisis involving only third parties, or only allies.

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\*Luttwak, op. cit., pp. 75-78.



b. Port visits and transits in direct proximity to land:

Effects 1 and 2, as above. More suitable for effects on public opinion as opposed to the ruling groups only. Essentially supportive but not always.

c. Display of combat capabilities in action, where no direct relationship to any specific threat obtains.

To augment the intensity of effects 1 and 2, as in B/a above.

d. Display of specific combat capabilities in action where these are appropriate to counter a specific enemy threat or to pose an equally specific threat (e.g., an ASW display if enemy submarine threat to friendly ship-ping; amphibious display to threaten a landing, etc.):

1. To augment intensity of effects 1 and 2, as in B/a above.
2. To render coercion, and/or support, narrow and limited as opposed to general and open-ended. Where the aim is to avoid a stance of general opposition (or support) and to convey intention to oppose some specific enemy acts, or require a specific act of compliance, or support a client in some particular respect, and not in any venture he may be contemplating.

### C. Fleet Configuration Changes

a. Increase/reduction in battle readiness (i.e., withdrawal of logistic support ships and any non-combatant auxiliaries; or on the contrary, anticipation of routine replenishment or maintenance operations, etc.):

1. To augment/reduce intensity of coercive or supportive effects in general.
2. To signal concern/disen-gagement in general.

b. Task-force selection out of normally deployed fleet to accentuate specific combat capabilities.

1. To augment suasion effects, as above, further.
2. To limit scope of coercion, or support to a narrower range of own-side actions. (e.g., to deter, say, a





Syrian attack on Lebanon, or compel a withdrawal, task-force sent--as per A & B--but without amphibious elements in order to prevent others' perception of own-side intention to land, or occupy.)

#### D. Warship Configuration Changes

a. Increase/reduction of battle readiness in crew dispositions, signalling procedures, etc.

As in C/a-1 and 2, above.

b. Where applicable, specific type of battle readiness (e.g., carrier aircraft sent up for CAP [Combat Air Patrol] and ASW only; or for attack too; gunfire readiness or ASW readiness only). Applicable where ship flexibility obtains, and where data available to prospective targets of suasion.

As in C/b-1 and 2, above.

#### E. Use of Capabilities

a. Intrusive reconnaissance by naval aircraft or ships in direct proximity to land or adversary warships.

1. To deter adversary moves by signalling advance knowledge and possibility of alerting the prospective targets.
2. To intensify coercive or supportive effects in general in association with other moves under A, B, C, D.
3. To suggest preparation for particular combat actions (e.g., air strikes) in association with B/d, C/b, or D/b.

b. Interposition (of fleet units between third-party or adversary warships

1. To reinforce deterrence or compellence, or provide support to clients.



and their targets; to provide close escort of threatened shipping; to intercept amphibious landings, etc.):

2. To render suasion effects specific, and therefore limit the scope of intervention in others' eyes, as per B/d.

c. 'Symbolic' and non-destructive force. (e.g., forcing submarines to the surface by continuous pursuit; harassment of adversary ship movements; deliberate off-target shooting or air attack; infliction of minor damage seen to have been deliberately minimized, etc.)

As in b/1 and 2 above.

All of the above (A-E) to be coupled if required with diplomatic/media "signalling."



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